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Volume - II

Chhawchharia

ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAN

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ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

Sanskrit Text with Transliteration, English Commentary alongwith Explanatory Notes, Relevant Appendices etc.

Commentary by

Sri Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

of

Maharṣi Vedavyāsa

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THE
CHAUKHAMBA SURBHARATI STUDIES
8

ADHYĀTMA RĀMĀYAṆA

of

Maharṣi Vedavyāsa

Sanskrit Text with Transliteration, English Commentary
alongwith Explanatory Notes, Relevant Appendices etc.

VOLUME - II

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Compiled and Translated by
Sri Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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To My Most Beloved Lord Ram

A Humble Word from Author

No creature is perfect; it's foolhardy to claim so. The best of paintings cannot replace the original; the best of words cannot express the original emotions and sentiments. Even the Lord was not satisfied by one flower or butterfly – he went on endlessly evolving and designing new forms.

Honestly, I am totally incompetent – it is the Lord who has done the actual writing and had moved my fingers as if they were mere instruments in his divine hands. But nonetheless, it's a tribute to the Lord's glory that he does not take the credit himself, but bestows it to them whom he loves as his very own. And to be his very own is indeed an unmatched honour. However, I still beg forgiveness for all omissions, commissions and transgressions that I may have inadvertently made. It's the Lord's glories that I sing, rejoice in, write on and think of to the best of my ability. I hope the readers will also absorb the divine fragrance effusing from the flowers representing the Lord's books, enjoy the ambrosia pouring out of them and marvel at the Lord's stupendous glories.

This effort is submitted at the Lord's holy feet, and finding no word to express my gratitude to him, I just wish to remain quiet, and let my silence do the speaking and praying on my behalf.

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

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LANKA KAND

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 1

Departure of the monkey army for Lanka

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

यथावद्भाषितं वाक्यं श्रुत्वा रामो हनूमतः। उवाचानन्तरं वाक्यं हर्षेण महतावृतः।। 1।।
कार्यं कृतं हनुमता देवैरपि सुदुष्करम्। मनसापि यदन्येन स्मर्तुं शक्यं न भूतले।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

yathāvadbhāṣitaṃ vākyaṃ śrutvā rāmo hanūmataḥ/
uvācānantaraṃ vākyaṃ harṣeṇa mahatāvṛtaḥ//
kāryaṃ kṛtaṃ hanumatā devairapi suduṣkaram/
manasāpi yadanyena smartuṃ śakyaṃ na bhūtale//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing the words of Hanuman, who had narrated what Sita had said verbatim, Sri Ram said most cheerfully (1), 'Whatever work Hanuman has done is difficult and daunting even for the Gods to do. On the surface of the earth, no one can even dare to imagine or think about doing it (2).

शतयोजनविस्तीर्णं लङ्घयेत्कः पयोनिधिम्। लङ्कां च राक्षसैर्गुप्तां को वा धर्षयितुं क्षमः।। 3।।
भृत्यकार्यं हनुमता कृतं सर्वमशेषतः। सुग्रीवस्येदृशो लोके न भूतो न भविष्यति।। 4।।

śatayojanavistīrṇaṃ laṅghayetkaḥ payonidhim/
laṅkāṃ ca rākṣasairguptāṃ ko vā dharṣayituṃ kṣamaḥ//
bhṛtyakāryaṃ hanumatā kṛtaṃ sarvamaśeṣataḥ/
sugrīvasyedṛśo loke na bhūto na bhaviṣyati//

Say, who is capable of crossing the hundred Yojan (800 miles) wide ocean and demolishing Lanka which is protected by the demons? (3). Hanuman has proficiently lived up to the expectations of a loyal, faithful and diligent servant (subordinate) of Sugriv. There has been none in the past and shall never be in the future anyone such as him in this world (4)

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अहं च रघुवंशश्च लक्ष्मणश्च कपीश्वरः। जानक्या दर्शनेनाद्य रक्षिताः स्मो हनूमता।। 5।।
सर्वथा सुकृतं कार्यं जानक्याः परिमार्गणम्। समुद्रं मनसा स्मृत्वा सीदतीव मनो मम।।6।।

ahaṃ ca raghuvaṃśaśca lakṣmaṇaśca kapīśvaraḥ /
jānakyā darśanenādya rakṣitāḥ smo hanūmatā //
sarvathā sukṛtaṃ kāryaṃ jānakyāḥ parimārgaṇam /
samudraṃ manasā smṛtvā sīdatīva mano mama //

By seeing (and bringing the news of) Janki (Sita), Hanuman has saved me as well as the clan of Raghu[1], Laxman, Sugriv and others as well (5). The job of ascertaining the whereabouts of Sita has been done, but my heart and mind gets a little alarmed and dismayed on thinking about the intervening ocean (because it is the greatest of daunting and insurmountable obstacles to be overcome now) (6).

[Note :—[1]When Sri Ram says that the entire Raghu clan has been saved by Hanuman bringing news of Sita being alive, he means that if there was some bad news, or no news at all, he would have ended his life and Laxman would have followed suit. When the news eventually reached Ayodhya, or when he did not turn up in the city after the expiry of the 14 year exile period, it was sure that Bharat would have ended his life, and he will be followed by Shatrughan. With the father already dead and there being no offspring of any of the brothers yet, the chain would break and there would be no one to carry forward the family title or name.]

कथं नक्रझषाकीर्णं समुद्रं शतयोजनम्। लङ्घयित्वा रिपुं हन्यां कथं द्रक्ष्यामि जानकीम्।। 7।।
श्रुत्वा तु रामवचनं सुग्रीवः प्राह राघवम्। समुद्रं लङ्घयिष्यामो महानक्रझषाकुलम्।। 8।।
लङ्कां च विधमिष्यामो हनिष्यामोऽद्य रावणम्। चिन्तां त्यज रघुश्रेष्ठ चिन्ता कार्यविनाशिनी।।9।।

kathaṃ nakrajhaṣākīrṇaṃ samudraṃ śatayojanam /
laṅghayitvā ripuṃ hanyāṃ kathaṃ drakṣyāmi jānakīm //
śrutvā tu rāmavacanaṃ sugrīvaḥ prāha rāghava /
samudraṃ laṅghayiṣyāmo mahānakrajhaṣākulam //
laṅkāṃ ca vidhamiṣyāmo haniṣyāmo'dya rāvaṇam /
cintāṃ tyaja raghuśreṣṭhaḥ cintā kāryavināśinī //

How will I kill the enemy by crossing the hundred Yojan wide ocean full of obstacles and alligators? And how will I see Janki?' (7).

Hearing these dismayed, helpless and doubtful words of Sri Ram, Sugriv said, 'We shall leap across the ocean full of large and formidable barriers/obstacles (such as whirlpools, huge waves, reefs, mountains etc.) and fishes (such as alligators, sharks, whales etc.) (8). Then we

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shall soon destroy Lanka and wrench control of it, and kill the lowly and wicked Ravana. Oh the best in king Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram)! You must leave aside worrying, for worry ruins the task at hand (9).

एतान्पश्य महासत्त्वान् शूरान्वानरपुङ्गवान्। त्वत्प्रियार्थं समुद्युक्तान्प्रवेष्टुमपि पावकम्।। 10।।
समुद्रतरणे बुद्धिं कुरुष्व प्रथमं ततः। दृष्ट्वा लङ्कां दशग्रीवो हत इत्येव मन्महे।। 11।।

etānpaśya mahāsattvān śūrānvānarapuṅgavān /
tvatpriyārthaṃ samudyuktānpraveṣṭumapi pāvakam //
samudrataraṇe buddhiṃ kuruṣva prathamaṃ tataḥ /
dṛṣṭvā laṅkāṃ daśagrīvo hata ityeva manmahe //

Have a look at those great, valorous, valiant, victorious, bold, strong and ace monkeys who are the best in their race. They are ready even to enter the fire in order to do what is good or pleasing for you (10). Let's first think about crossing the ocean, for as soon as we see Lanka (and land there), we regard Ravana as good as dead (i.e. once we are across, the demons are no problem for us for we can easily overcome them and crush the enemy) (11).

नहि पश्याम्यहं कञ्चित्त्रिषु लोकेषु राघव। गृहीतधनुषो यस्ते तिष्ठेदभिमुखो रणे।। 12।।
सर्वथा नो जयो राम भविष्यति न संशयः। निमित्तानि च पश्यामि तथा भूतानि सर्वशः।। 13।।

nahi paśyāmahaṃ kañcittriṣu lokeṣu rāghava /
gṛhītadhanuṣo yaste tiṣṭhedabhimukho raṇe //
sarvathā no jayo rāma bhaviṣyato na saṃśayaḥ /
nimittāni ca paśyāmi tathā bhūtāni sarvaśaḥ //

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! I do not see (or visualise) any warrior who can stand fast in the battle in front of you and face you when you lift your bow (12). Oh Sri Ram! There is not the slightest of doubts that victory will be ours because I can see relevant good and encouraging omens everywhere (which are indications portending victory) ' (13).

सुग्रीववचनं श्रुत्वा भक्तिवीर्यसमन्वितम्। अङ्गीकृत्याब्रवीद्रामो हनूमन्तं पुरःस्थितम्।। 14।।
येन केन प्रकारेण लङ्घयामो महार्णवम्। लङ्कास्वरूपं मे ब्रूहि दुःसाध्यं देवदानवैः।। 15।।

sugrīvavacanaṃ śrutvā bhaktivīryasamanvitam /
aṅgīkṛtyātbravīdrāmo hanūmantaṃ puraḥsthitam //
yena kena prakāreṇa laṅghayāmo mahārṇavam /
laṅkāsvarūpaṃ me brūhi duḥsādhyaṃ devadānavaiḥ //

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Hearing these words of Sugriv, which were full of devotion, loyalty, encouragement, courage, valour and manliness, Sri Ram accepted his advice (i.e. he accepted his council to plan how to cross the ocean first, and stop unnecessarily worrying, brooding and procrastinating). He said to Hanuman (14), 'We shall first cross the ocean somehow. But do tell us about the general lay-out and description of Lanka. It is said (or heard) that it is a very difficult and daunting prospect to win (overcome, conquer) it even for the Gods and other demons (who do not have allegiance to Ravana) (15).

ज्ञात्वा तस्य प्रतीकारं करिष्यामि कपीश्वर। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं हनूमान्विनयान्वितः।। 16।।
उवाच प्राञ्जलिर्देव यथा दृष्टं ब्रवीमि ते। लङ्का दिव्या पुरी देव त्रिकूटशिखरे स्थिता।। 17।।

jñātvā tasya pratikāraṃ kariṣyāmi kapīśvaraḥ /
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ hanūmānvinayānvitaḥ //
uvāca prāñjalirdeva yathā dṛṣṭaṃ bravīmi te /
laṅkāṃ divyā purī deva trikūṭaśikhare sthitā //

Oh the lord of monkeys (Hanuman)! Once I come to know about its design and layout, I shall think of (devise) some way to overcome those hurdles'.

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Hanuman folded his hands in respect and said politely (16), 'I shall submit before you whatever I have seen at Lanka. The majestic city is established on the summit of Mt. Trikoot (17).

स्वर्णप्राकारसहिता स्वर्णाट्टालकसंयुता। परिखाभिः परिवृता पूर्णाभिर्निर्मलोदकैः।। 18।।
नानोपवनशोभाढ्या दिव्यवापीभिरावृता। गृहैर्विचित्रशोभाढ्यैर्मणिस्तम्भमयैः शुभैः।। 19।।

svarṇaprākārasahitā svarṇāṭṭālakasaṃyutā /
parikhābhiḥ parivṛtā pūrṇābhirnirmalodakaiḥ //
nānopavanaśobhāḍhyā divyavāpībhirāvṛtā /
gṛhairvicitraśobhāḍhyairmaṇistambhamayaiḥ śubhaiḥ //

It has golden parapets and ramparts, and tall buildings also made of gold. It is surrounded on all the sides by moats and trenches full of clean water (18). It looks very magnificent, beautiful and grand due to many gardens, groves and orchards. They have numerous ponds and lakes scattered here and there. The buildings are adorned by pillars studded with precious gems and beautiful jewels (19).

[Note :—Please see footnote to verse nos. 41-42, Canto 4 of Sundar Kand.]

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पश्चिमद्वारमासाद्य गजवाहाः सहस्रशः। उत्तरे द्वारि तिष्ठन्ति साश्ववाहाः सपत्तयः।। 20।।
तिष्ठन्त्यर्बुदसङ्ख्याकाः प्राच्यामपि तथैव च। रक्षिणो राक्षसा वीरा द्वारं दक्षिणमाश्रिताः।।21।।

paścimadvāramāsādya gajavāhāḥ sahasraśaḥ /
uttare dvāri tiṣṭhanti sāśvavāhāḥ sapattayaḥ //
tiṣṭhantyarbudasaṅkhyākāḥ prācyāmapi tathaiva ca /
rakṣiṇo rākṣasā vīrā dvāraṃ dakṣiṇamāśritāḥ //

Stationed near its western gate, there are thousands of war elephants; in the northern gate there is infantry as well as cavalry; in the eastern gate there are one thousand million demon warriors, while the southern gate is protected by equal number of brave and courageous warriors (20-21).

मध्यकक्षेऽप्यसङ्ख्याता गजाश्वरथपत्तयः। रक्षयन्ति सदा लङ्कां नानास्त्रकुशलाः प्रभो।। 22।।
सङ्क्रमैर्विविधैर्लङ्का शतघ्नीभिश्च संयुता। एवं स्थितेऽपि देवेश शृणु मे तत्र चेष्टितम्।।23।।

madhyakakṣe'pyasaṅkhyātā gajāśvarathapattayaḥ /
rakṣayanti sadā laṅkāṃ nānāstrakuśalāḥ prabho //
saṅkramairvividhairlaṅkā śataghnībhiśca saṃyutā /
evaṃ sthite'pi deveśa śṛṇu me tatra ceṣṭitam //

In the centre of the city there is a huge and immeasurable army consisting of elephants, horses, chariots and infantry troops to protect the city at all times. All of them (the troops) are experts in using various types of arms and armaments (22). The entrance to the city is protected by different types of tunnels and cannons. But oh Lord! Inspite of the presence of all these formidable and insurmountable hurdles, hear what I have done (23).

दशाननबलौघस्य चतुर्थांशो मया हतः। दग्ध्वा लङ्कां पुरीं स्वर्णप्रासादो धर्षितो मया।। 24।।
शतघ्न्यः सङ्क्रमाश्चैव नाशिता मे रघूत्तम। देव त्वद्दर्शनादेव लङ्का भस्मीकृता भवेत्।।25।।
प्रस्थानं कुरु देवेश गच्छामो लवणाम्बुधेः। तीरं सह महावीरैर्वानरौघैः समन्ततः।। 26।।

daśānanabalaughasya caturthāṃśo mayā hataḥ /
dagdhvā laṅkāṃ purīṃ svarṇaprāsādo dharṣito mayā //
śataghnyaḥ saṅkramāścaiva nāśitā me raghūttama /
deva tvaddarśanādeva laṅkā bhasmīkṛtā bhavet //
prasthānaṃ kuru deveśa gacchāmo lavaṇāmbudheḥ /
tīraṃ saha mahāvīrairvānaraughaiḥ samantataḥ //

I have destroyed (literally killed) one fourth of Ravana's army,

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have burnt Lanka, and have ruined (i.e. demolished) his golden palace (24). Oh the most exalted in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram)! I have destroyed the tunnels and cannons. Oh Lord! (It is my belief that) Lanka would be easily reduced to ashes (or rubble) as soon as your sight falls on it. [That is, you can very easily conquer it] (25). Oh the Lord of Gods! Now you must make preparations to go there. We must collect the army of most brave, bold, courageous and strong monkey warriors and approach the shores of the great salty ocean' (26).

श्रुत्वा हनूमतो वाक्यमुवाच रघुनन्दनः। सुग्रीव सैनिकान्सर्वान्प्रस्थानायाभिनोदय।। 27।।
इदानीमेव विजयो मुहूर्तः परिवर्तते। अस्मिन्मुहूर्ते गत्वाहं लङ्कां राक्षससङ्कुलाम्।। 28।।
सप्राकारां सुदुर्धर्षां नाशयामि सरावणाम्। आनेष्यामि च सीतां मे दक्षिणाक्षि स्फुरत्यधः।।29।।

śrutvā hanūmato vākyamuvāca raghunandanaḥ/
sugrīva sainikānsarvānprasthānāyābhinodaya//
idānīmeva vijayo muhurtaḥ parivartate/
asminmuhurte gatvāhaṃ laṅkāṃ rākṣasasaṅkulām//
saprākārāṃ sudurdharṣāṃ nāśayāmi sarāvaṇām/
āneṣyāmi ca sītāṃ me dakṣiṇākṣi sphuratyadhaḥ//

Hearing the words of Hanuman, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) said, 'Oh Sugriv! Order all your troops (monkey soldiers) to set out immediately (27) because the auspicious moment portending (indicating) victory exists currently. I shall go on the mission to Lanka which is full of demons (to liberate Sita and kill Ravana) during the currency of this very auspicious moment (28). Lanka is very invincible and inaccessible due to the walls of the fort etc. I shall destroy it along with Ravana and bring Sita back. At this moment, the lower lid of my right eye is fluttering (which is considered a very good omen) (29).

प्रयातु वाहिनी सर्वा वानराणां तरस्विनाम्। रक्षन्तु यूथपाः सेनामग्रे पृष्ठे च पार्श्वयोः।। 30।।
हनूमन्तमथारुह्य गच्छाम्यग्रेऽङ्गदं ततः। आरुह्य लक्ष्मणो यातु सुग्रीव त्वं मया सह।। 31।।

prayātu vāhinī sarvā vānarāṇāṃ tarasvinām/
rakṣantu yūthapāḥ senāmagre pṛṣṭhe ca pārśvayoḥ//
hanūmantamathāruhya gacchāmyagre'ṅgadaṃ tataḥ/
āruhya lakṣmaṇo yātu sugrīva tvaṃ mayā saha//

Let the full army of brave and strong monkeys make its exit from here forthwith. Those who are chieftains or commanders of the various army battalions and brigades, they should guard and protect the

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company under their command/charge from all the directions—from the front and rear, and by the sides (30). I shall ride on the shoulders of Hanuman right in the front (vanguard) of the army, and Laxman shall follow me on the shoulders of Angad. And Sugriv should accompany me (31).

[Note :—The reader should note how Sri Ram and Laxman led the army and how it was organised.]

गजो गवाक्षो गवयो मैन्दो द्विविद एव च। नलो नीलः सुषेणश्च जाम्बवांश्च तथापरे ।। 32 ।।
सर्वे गच्छन्तु सर्वत्र सेनायाः शत्रुघातिनः। इत्याज्ञाप्य हरीन् रामः प्रतस्थे सहलक्ष्मणः ।। 33 ।।

gajo gavākṣo gavayo maindo dvivida eva ca/
nalo nīlaḥ suṣeṇaśca jāmbavāṃśca tathāpare//
sarve gacchantu sarvatra senāyāḥ śatrughātinaḥ/
ityājñāpya harīn rāmaḥ pratasthe sahalakṣmaṇaḥ//

Gaj, Gawaksha, Gawayo, Mainda, Dwivid, Nal, Neel, Sushen and Jamvant and all other chief commanders who are potent, competent and proficient in destroying the enemy should follow the army from the outer fringes (in order to maintain order as well as guard the huge army from going astray and out of control)'. Having thus instructed the monkeys, Sri Ram embarked on his mission along with Laxman (32-33).

सुग्रीवसहितो हर्षात्सेनामध्यगतो विभुः। वारणेन्द्रनिभाः सर्वे वानराः कामरूपिणः ।। 34 ।।
क्ष्वेलन्तः परिगर्जन्तो जग्मुस्ते दक्षिणां दिशम्। भक्षयन्तो ययुः सर्वे फलानि च मधूनि च ।। 35 ।।

sugrīvasahito harṣātsenāmadhyagato vibhuḥ/
vāraṇendranibhāḥ sarve vānarāḥ kāmarūpiṇaḥ//
kṣvelantaḥ parigarjanto jagmuste dakṣiṇāṃ diśam/
bhakṣayanto yayuḥ sarve phalāni ca madhūni ca//

The Vibhu (an epithet used for Lord Vishnu, meaning omnipresent, all-pervading, almighty, magnanimous, majestic, eternal supreme Lord, i.e. Sri Ram) was going in the center of the army along with Laxman. All the monkeys were huge as if they were king of elephants and could assume any form they wished (34).

All of them leapt, pranced, skipped, jumped, hopped and bounced, roaring, eating fruits and drinking honey as they moved swiftly in the south direction (towards the shore of the ocean) (35).

[Note :—In verse no. 31, Sri Ram had said he will go in the front or

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vanguard of the army, while verse no. 34 says he was in the middle of the army. Well, here center or middle does not mean the literal center or the actual, physical, geometrical center of the army. It indicates that though he was leading the multitude of the army from the front, there were so many monkeys walking in front of him, behind him and on his flanks that he appeared to be in the center of the army or surrounded by it from all the sides.]

ब्रुवन्तो राघवस्याग्रे हनिष्यामोऽद्य रावणम्। एवं ते वानरश्रेष्ठा गच्छन्त्यतुलविक्रमाः।। 36।।
हरिभ्यामुह्यमानौ तौ शुशुभाते रघूत्तमौ। नक्षत्रैः सेवितौ यद्वच्चन्द्रसूर्याविवाम्बरे।। 37।।

bruvanto rāghavasyāgre haniṣyāmo'dya rāvaṇam /
evaṃ te vānaraśreṣṭhā gacchantyatulavikramāḥ //
haribhyāmuhyamānau tau śuśubhāte raghuttamau /
nakṣatraiḥ sevitau yadvaccandrasūryāvivāmbare //

In this way, the matchlessly valorous, peerlessly valiant and stupendously mighty and strong army consisting of the best of monkeys moved along with Raghav saying (shouting defiantly) that they would kill Ravana the same day they see him (36).

The two most exalted ones in the clan of king Raghu (i.e. Sri Ram and Laxman) looked as adorable, glorious and magnificent while going (riding) on the shoulders of Hanuman and Angad respectively as the Sun and the Moon look majestically in the sky amongst the stars (and other heavenly bodies) (37).

आवृत्य पृथिवीं कृत्स्नां जगाम महती चमूः। प्रस्फोटयन्तः पुच्छाग्रानुद्वहन्तश्च पादपान्।। 38।।
शैलानारोहयन्तश्च जग्मुर्मारुतवेगतः। असङ्ख्याताश्च सर्वत्र वानराः परिपूरिताः।। 39।।
हृष्टास्ते जग्मुरत्यर्थं रामेण परिपालिताः। गता चमूर्दिवारात्रं क्वचिन्नासज्जत क्षणम्।। 40।।

āvṛtya pṛthivīṃ kṛtsnāṃ jagāma mahatī camūḥ /
prasphoṭayantaḥ pucchāgrānudvahantaśca pādapān //
śailānārohayantaśca jagmurmārutavegataḥ /
asaṅkhyātāśca sarvatra vānarāḥ paripūritāḥ //
hṛṣṭāste jagmuratyarthaṃ rāmeṇa paripālitāḥ /
gatā camūrdivārātraṃ kvacinnāsajjata kṣaṇam //

That huge army almost covered the earth from end to end as it moved ahead (i.e. it stretched as far as the eyes could see). The monkeys shook, twirled, whirled, jerked, swayed, twisted and thrashed their tails merrily, uprooted trees, jumped and hopped on mountains and hills en-route, and moved swiftly, with great agility, at the speed of

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wind. At that time, uncountable monkeys could be visible in all the directions (38-39).

Being protected by Sri Ram (or being assured that they are safe and sound with Sri Ram with them), they were cheerfully and merrily surging ahead with agility and speed. That monkey army moved continuously day and night without stopping even for a second (moment) (40).

काननानि विचित्राणि पश्यन्मलयसह्ययोः। ते सह्यं समतिक्रम्य मलयं च तथा गिरीम्।। 41।।
आययुश्चानुपूर्व्येण समुद्रं भीमनिःस्वनम्। अवतीर्य हनूमन्तं रामः सुग्रीवसंयुतः।। 42।।

kānanāni vicitrāṇi paśyanmalayasahyayoḥ /
te sahyaṃ samatikramya malayaṃ ca tathā girim //
āyayuścānupūrvyeṇa samudraṃ bhīmaniḥsvanam /
avatīrya hanūmantaṃ rāmaḥ sugrīvasaṃyutaḥ //

At last, seeing the magnificent but strange forest between the Malayachal and Sahayadri mountains (i.e. the valley of these two mountains), they crossed it and finally reached the shores of the vast ocean which was roaring most fiercely and defiantly in front of them. Then Sri Ram got off from the shoulders of Hanuman, and accompanied by Sugriv (41-42)—

सलिलाभ्याशमासाद्य रामो वचनमब्रवीत्। आगताः स्मो वयं सर्वे समुद्रं मकरालयम्।। 43।।
इतो गन्तुमशक्यं नो निरुपायेन वानराः। अत्र सेनानिवेशोऽस्तु मन्त्रयामोऽस्य तारणे।। 44।।

salilābhyāśamāsādya rāmo vacanamabravīt /
āgatāḥ smo vayaṃ sarve samudraṃ makarālayam //
ito gantumaśakyaṃ no nirupāyena vānarāḥ /
atra senāniveśo'stu mantrayāmo'sya tāraṇe //

—He approached the water of the ocean. Sri Ram said, 'We have finally come to the shore of the ocean which is full of ferocious alligators etc. (43), but we cannot go across it without adopting some special strategy or means. So, put up (pitch) camp for the army here. We shall now discuss amongst ourselves how to cross this ocean' (44).

श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं सुग्रीवः सागरान्तिके। सेनां न्यवेशयत्क्षिप्रं रक्षितां कपिकुञ्जरैः।। 45।।
ते पश्यन्तो विषेदुस्तं सागरं भीमदर्शनम्। महोन्नततरङ्गाढ्यं भीमनक्रभयङ्करम्।।46।।

śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ sugrīvaḥ sāgarāntike /
senāṃ nyaveśayatkṣipraṃ rakṣitāṃ kapikuñjaraiḥ //

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te paśyanto viṣedustaṃ sāgaraṃ bhīmadarśanam /
mahonnatatarańgāḍhyaṃ bhīmanakrabhayaṅkaram //

Hearing the words of Sri Ram, Sugriv ordered the army to pitch its camp near the ocean and many chief warriors amongst them began to maintain a strict vigil over it (literally, they protected the army from all sides and ensured that they maintained discipline and order) (45).

Seeing the dreadful, ferocious and turbulent ocean full of huge surging waves and insurmountable, daunting and formidable obstructions, all of them were most baffled and overwhelmed, mentally despaired and dejected at the difficulty of the task at hand (46).

अगाधं गगनाकारं सागरं वीक्ष्य दुःखिताः। तरिष्यामः कथं घोरं सागरं वरुणालयम्॥ 47॥
हन्तव्योऽस्माभिरद्यैव रावणो राक्षसाधमः। इति चिन्ताकुलाः सर्वे रामपार्श्वे व्यवस्थिताः॥48॥

agādhaṃ gaganākāraṃ sāgaraṃ vīkṣya duḥkhitāḥ /
tariṣyāmaḥ kathaṃ ghoraṃ sāgaraṃ varuṇālayam //
hantavyo'smābhiradyaiva rāvaṇo rākṣasādhamaḥ /
iti cintākulāḥ sarve rāmapārśve vyavasthitā //

They felt extremely frustrated, hapless, helpless and gloomy on seeing that ocean which was as fathomless and without an end as the sky. They were awed and dumbstruck, and began to wonder, 'How shall we cross this vast abode (treasury) of water (i.e. the ocean) (47). We have to kill (overcome and get rid of) the evil, lowly and wicked demon Ravana today itself (but what can we do now, how shall we reach him when this ocean is obstructing our way?)'. Gravely worrying, brooding gloomily and undecided thus, all of them sat surrounding Sri Ram (48).

रामः सीतामनुस्मृत्य दुःखेन महतावृतः। विलप्य जानकीं सीतां बहुधा कार्यमानुषः॥ 49॥
अद्वितीयश्चिदात्मैकः परमात्मा सनातनः। यस्तु जानाति रामस्य स्वरूपं तत्त्वतो जनः॥50॥

rāmaḥ sītāmanusmṛtya duḥkhena mahatāvṛtaḥ /
vilapya jānakīṃ sītāṃ bahudhā kāryamānuṣaḥ //
advitīyaścidātmaikaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ /
yastu jānāti rāmasya svarūpaṃ tattvato janaḥ //

Sri Ram was also engulfed (submerged) in immense sorrows and anguish of separation by remembering Sita. Though he is the one without a second, eternal, enlightened Parmatma (the supreme Soul)

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personified, still he wailed and lamented for Sita in various ways because he had assumed the form of a human being to complete an assignment (for the Gods). [The assignment was to kill the demons on behalf of the Gods and free the earth of its burden.] Those persons who know (or are aware of) the real, essential and truthful form and basic nature of Sri Ram (49-50)—

तं न स्पृशति दुःखादि किमुतानन्दमव्ययम्। दुःखहर्षभयक्रोधलोभमोहमदादयः।। 51।।
अज्ञानलिङ्गान्येतानि कुतः सन्ति चिदात्मनि। देहाभिमानिनो दुःखं न देहस्य चिदात्मनः।। 52।।

taṃ na spṛśyati duḥkhādi kimutānandamavyayam/
duḥkhaharṣabhayakrodhalobhamohamadādayaḥ //
ajñānaliṅgānyetāni kutaḥ santi cidātmani/
dehābhimānino duḥkhaṃ na dehasya cidātmanaḥ //

—Such persons (who become aware of Sri Ram's true form and nature) are untouched by (i.e. unaffected, uninfluenced and do not come under the spell of) sorrows, miseries, agonies, troubles and tribulations of all kinds in the world.

[If this is what happens to an ordinary person—] Then say, what can be said of him (Sri Ram) who is an image and an embodiment of eternal bliss, peace and tranquility, and who is without an end, is imperishable and indestructible? Such traits as having sorrows, miseries and agonies, having joy, delight, exhilaration and happiness, having fear, confoundedness and consternations, having anger, wrath and a sense of revenge and vengeance, having avarice, greed, rapacity, desires and yearnings, having attachments, infatuations and endearments, having haughtiness, pride, arrogance, ego and hypocrisy etc.—all of these are signs of ignorance and delusions.

How can they ever exist in Sri Ram who is eternally enlightened, wise, sagacious, self realised and erudite, who is an embodiment of wisdom and truthful knowledge, and is an eternal Soul which is pure consciousness? Sorrows and anguish related to the body afflict those who are proud of their bodies (or who think that 'they' are 'the body' and identify themselves with the body), but not those who are realised about the conscious, eternal and enlightened Atma or soul (51-52).

सम्प्रसादे द्वयाभावात्सुखमात्रं हि दृश्यते। बुद्ध्याद्यभावात्संशुद्धे दुःखं तत्र न दृश्यते।
अतो दुःखादिकं सर्वं बुद्धेरेव न संशयः।। 53।।

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samprasāde dvayābhāvātsukhamātraṃ hi dṛśyate /
buddhyādyabhāvātsaṃśuddhe duḥkhaṃ tatra na dṛśyate /
ato duḥkhādikaṃ sarvaṃ buddhereva na saṃśayaḥ //

In the state of 'Samadhi' (a meditative trance-like state), there is total absence of 'duality' and its attendant perplexities, vexations, confoundedness and consternations which in turn leads to frustration and perpetual sorrows and anguish for the creature. [The notion of duality creates the idea of 'you and me' as two separate entities, which in turn cause all sorts of schisms, frictions, jealousy, hate and competitions leading to agitations and restlessness. This duality is extended by the creature to include the 'soul' which is actually one and non-dual, thereby causing so much confusion about the creature and the supreme Lord, though the former is but a microcosmic image of the latter.]

And without this confusion of duality, there is the experience of pure and undisturbed bliss, peace and tranquility. In that state of Samadhi, there is absence of interference by the mind, intellect etc., as a result of which only the pure Atma (which is pure consciousness) is discernible—so there is not even a hint of sorrows, anguish, tribulations, consternations, perplexities and agonies etc. of any kind (because these traits belong to the realm of the mind and not the Atma). Therefore it is established without doubt that sorrows and miseries, torments and tribulations etc. are all caused by the mind-intellect complex, called the subtle body of the creature, and not by the Atma residing in its causal body (53).

[Note :—Verse no. 51 second line to verse no. 53 deal with the Vedantic philosophy pertaining to the cause of sorrows. The concept of Samadhi is also described in Uttar Kand, Canto 5 verse nos. 46-53, as well as in appendix no.2 of this book.]

रामः परात्मा पुरुषः पुराणो नित्योदितो नित्यसुखो निरीहः।
तथापि मायागुणसङ्गतोऽसौ सुखीव दुःखीव विभाव्यतेऽबुधैः॥ 54॥

rāmaḥ parātmā puruṣaḥ purāṇo nityodito nityasukho nirīhaḥ /
tathāpi māyāguṇasaṅgato'sau sugrīva duḥkhīva vibhāvyate'budhaiḥ //

Sri Ram is the Parmatma (the supreme Soul, the Lord God), the Puran Purush (one who is most ancient, mentioned in and extolled by the scriptures called the Purans), is an image and an embodiment of eternal light (representing wisdom, truthful knowledge of the reality

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and enlightenment), is an image and an embodiment of eternal and truthful bliss and happiness, joy and delight, beatitude and felicity, and is disinterested in, unattached to, dispassionate with, unaffected and not influenced by one and all. But ignorant and foolish people regard him (Sri Ram) as being either happy or sorrowful by the virtue of the Maya's characteristic features which envelop the mind-intellect apparatus of the creature. [That is, by the deluding influence of Maya, the ignorant creature thinks erroneously that the equitable Lord is having any kind of sorrows and anguish, or is happy and cheerful, whereas the actual position is that the Lord is untouched by any of these notions and emotions.] (54).

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 2

Vibhishan rebuked by Ravana

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

लङ्कायां रावणो दृष्ट्वा कृतं कर्म हनूमता। दुष्करं दैवतैर्वापि ह्रिया किञ्चिदवाङ्मुखः।। 1।।
आहूय मन्त्रिणः सर्वानिदं वचनमब्रवीत्। हनूमता कृतं कर्म भवद्भिर्दृष्टमेव तत्।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

laṅkāyāṃ rāvaṇo dṛṣṭvā kṛtaṃ karma hanūmatā /
duṣkaraṃ daivatairvāpi hriyā kiñcidavāṅmukhaḥ //
āhūya mantriṇaḥ sarvānidaṃ vacanamabravīt /
hanūmatā kṛtaṃ karma bhavadbhirdṛṣṭameva tat //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! There, meanwhile, seeing the deeds done by Hanuman which were difficult even for the Gods to do (or ever think of doing), Ravana summoned his ministers, and lowering his head in shame before them, he said, 'All of you have seen what Hanuman has done (1-2).

प्रविश्य लङ्कां दुर्धर्षां दृष्ट्वा सीतां दुरासदाम्। हत्वा च राक्षसान्वीरानक्षं मन्दोदरीसुतम्।। 3।।
दग्ध्वा लङ्कामशेषेण लङ्घयित्वा च सागरम्। युष्मान्सर्वानतिक्रम्य स्वस्थोऽगात्पुनरेव सः।।4।।

praviśya laṅkāṃ durdharṣāṃ dṛṣṭvā sītāṃ durāsadām /
hatvā ca rākṣasānvīrānakṣaṃ mandodarīsutam //
dagdhvā laṅkāmaśeṣeṇa laṅghayitvā ca sāgaram /
yuṣmānsarvānatikramya svastho'gātpunareva saḥ //

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He entered Lanka, which is most inaccessible and impregnable for any unwelcome intruder and uninvited trespasser, unhindered, met Sita which is also an impossible task, then he killed many demons along with Mandodari's son (Akshay Kumar), burnt the whole of Lanka, humiliated all of you brave and strong warriors, and then successfully crossed the ocean to return safely! (3-4).

किं कर्तव्यमितोऽस्माभिर्यूयं मन्त्रविशारदाः। मन्त्रयध्वं प्रयत्नेन यत्कृतं मे हितं भवेत्।। 5।।
रावणस्य वचः श्रुत्वा राक्षसास्तमथाब्रुवन्। देव शङ्का कुतो रामात्तव लोकजितो रणे।।6।।

kiṃ kartavyamito'smābhiryūyaṃ mantraviśāradāḥ/
mantrayadhvaṃ prayatnena yatkṛtaṃ me hitaṃ bhavet//
rāvaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā rākṣasāstamathābruvan/
deva śaṅkā kuto rāmāttava lokajito raṇe//

All of you are experts in wisdom, politics, behavioural science, prudence and ethics etc. Hence, what should we do now, what course of action should we adopt, what will be practical, prudent and appropriate in the present circumstances and what will be in our best of interests—ponder over it diligently and then guide and advise me' (5).

Hearing the words of Ravana, the demons (ministers, advisors and councilors) said, 'Oh Lord! What fear (literally doubt or suspicion) do you have from Sri Ram? You have won all the worlds in different wars till now (so how do you doubt about your victory over Sri Ram) (6).

इन्द्रस्तु बद्ध्वा निक्षिप्तः पुत्रेण तव पत्तने। जित्वा कुबेरमानीय पुष्पकं भुज्यते त्वया।। 7।।
यमो जितः कालदण्डाद्भयं नाभूत्तव प्रभो। वरुणो हुङ्कृतेनैव जितः सर्वेऽपि राक्षसाः।।8।।

indrastu baddhvā nikṣiptaṃ putreṇa tava pattane/
jitvā kuberamānīya puṣpakaṃ bhujyate tvayā//
yamo jitaḥ kāladaṇḍādbhayaṃ nābhūttava prabho/
varuṇo huṅkṛtenaiva jitaḥ sarve'pi rākṣasāḥ//

Your son (Meghnad) had tied Indra (the king of Gods) and brought him to his capital (bound in shackles). You yourself have won over Kuber (the God's treasurer) and enjoy his air plane called 'Pushpak' (7).

Oh Lord! You have conquered even Yam (the God of death and hell); you weren't afraid of his 'Kaal Dand' (literally, the baton of

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death). You had vanquished Varuna (the patron God of water) and the entire demon race by your mere roar and a shrill cry (i.e. they were so terrified of you that when they heard that you are approaching them with anger, they surrendered with any resistence) (8).

[Note :—Ravana's exploits are described in detail in Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 33-60. Further, these verses also show how flatterers and sycophants can misguide and ruin a king.]

मयो महासुरो भीत्या कन्यां दत्त्वा स्वयं तव। त्वद्वशे वर्ततेऽद्यापि किमुतान्ये महासुराः।।9।।
हनूमद्धर्षणं यत्तु तदवज्ञाकृतं च नः। वानरोऽयं किमस्माकमस्मिन्पौरुषदर्शने।।10।।

mayo mahāsuro bhītyā kanyāṃ dattvā svayaṃ tava /
tvadvaśe vartate'dyāpi kimutānye mahāsurāḥ //
hanūmaddharṣaṇaṃ yattu tadavajñākṛtaṃ ca naḥ /
vānaro'yaṃ kimasmākamasminpauruṣadarśane //

What to talk of other great demons, even Mayasur had been so afraid of you that he gave his daughter to you (in marriage) and remains your vassal (literally, under your command and subservient to you) even till this day (9).

The insult and humiliation that Hanuman had subjected you as well as us to was due to our own carelessness, ineptitude and inertia. We thought that he is a mere monkey, what is the great idea in showing strength and valour against such a humble creature as him. Therefore we neglected him (and as a result we were caught unawares). Otherwise, how dare he could ever oppose and show such disdain and contempt for us (10).

इत्युपेक्षितमस्माभिर्धर्षणं तेन किं भवेत्। वयं प्रमत्ताः किं तेन वञ्चिताः स्मो हनूमता।।11।।
जानीमो यदि तं सर्वे कथं जीवन् गमिष्यति। आज्ञापय जगत्कृत्स्नमवानरममानुषम्।।12।।
कृत्वायास्यामहे सर्वे प्रत्येकं वा नियोजय। कुम्भकर्णस्तदा प्राह रावणं राक्षसेश्वरम्।।13।।

ityupekṣitamasmābhirdharṣaṇaṃ tena kiṃ bhavet /
vayaṃ pramattāḥ kiṃ tena vañcitāḥ smo hanūmatā //
jānīmo yadi taṃ sarve kathaṃ jīvan gamiṣyati /
ājñāpaya jagatkṛtsnamavānaramamānuṣam //
kṛtvāyāsyāmahe sarve pratyekaṃ vā niyojaya /
kumbhakarṇastadā prāha rāvaṇaṃ rākṣaseśvaram //

Hence, though Hanuman could cheat or trick us (and inflict such humiliation upon us by killing our men and burning the city even as

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we watched helplessly) because of our own negligence, inertia or carelessness, so what happened (or how does it matter)? If we had known who he was (or what strength he had, what he was up to, what damage he would or could do) (11)—how could have he gone back alive? You give us your orders—we shall forthwith make the earth devoid of all the monkeys and humans (12). Or else, you can appoint single individuals amongst us to do this job'. [That is, we can get rid of the enemies' army single handedly; we do not need any support for we are fully capable of doing it]. Then Kumbhakarn (Ravana's brother) said to Ravana, the king of demons (13)—

आरब्धं यत्त्वया कर्म स्वात्मनाशाय केवलम्। न दृष्टोऽसि तदा भाग्यात्त्वं रामेण महात्मना।। 14।।
यदि पश्यति रामस्त्वां जीवन्नायासि रावण। रामो न मानुषो देवः साक्षान्नारायणोऽव्ययः।।15।।

ārabdhaṃ yattvayā karma svātmanāśāya kevalam/
na dṛṣṭo'si tadā bhāgyāttvaṃ rāmeṇa mahātmanā//
yadi paśyati rāmastvāṃ jīvannāyāsi rāvaṇa/
rāmo na mānuṣo devaḥ sākṣānnārayaṇo'vyayaḥ//

'The course of action or the plan upon which you have started working on, will only lead to your ruin. It was due to your good luck that the great Sri Ram did not see you while you were stealing (abducting) Sita (14).

Oh Ravana! If Sri Ram had seen you at that time, you wouldn't have returned alive. Sri Ram is no ordinary man. He is Lord Narayan himself who is eternal, imperishable, immutable and unchanging (15).

सीता भगवती लक्ष्मी रामपत्नी यशस्विनी। राक्षसानां विनाशाय त्वयानीता सुमध्यमा।। 16।।
विषपिण्डमिवागीर्य महामीनो यथा तथा। आनीता जानकी पश्चात्त्वया किं वा भविष्यति।।17।।

sītā bhagavati lakṣmī rāmapatnī yaśasvinī/
rākṣasānāṃ vināśāya tvayānītā sumadhyamā//
viṣapiṇḍamivāgīrya . mahāmīno yathā tathā/
ānītā jānakī paścāttvayā kiṃ vā bhaviṣyati//

The wife of Sri Ram, the famed Sita, is Bhagwati Laxmi personified. He has brought her to be a medium in the destruction of the demons (16). Just as a large fish gulps down a morsel of poisonous bait, you too have willingly brought Janki (Sita). No one knows what will happen in future (17).

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यद्यप्यनुचितं कर्म त्वया कृतमजानता। सर्वं समं करिष्यामि स्वस्थचित्तो भव प्रभो।। 18।।
कुम्भकर्णवचः श्रुत्वा वाक्यमिन्द्रजिदब्रवीत्। देहि देव ममानुज्ञां हत्वा रामं सलक्ष्मणम्।
सुग्रीवं वानरांश्चैव पुनर्यास्यामि तेऽन्तिकम्।। 19।।

yadyapyanucitaṃ karma tvayā kṛtamajānatā /
sarvaṃ samaṃ kariṣyāmi svasthacitto bhava prabho //
kumbhakarṇavacaḥ śrutvā vākyamindrajidabravīt /
dehi deva mamānujñāṃ hatvā rāmaṃ salakṣmaṇam /
sugrīvaṃ vānarāṃścaiva punaryāsyāmi te'ntikam //

Though you have done a very inappropriate and unrighteousness thing by mistake or out of ignorance, but now be quiet and take it easy. Oh Lord! I shall set it right' (18).

Hearing Kumbhakarn's reassuring words, Indrajeet (Meghnad) boasted, 'Oh Lord! Give me your permission. I shall immediately kill Laxman along with Sri Ram, Sugriv and all other monkeys, and come back to you victorious' (19).

[Note :—See Canto 7, verse nos. 51-70 also. Had Ravana paid heed to Kumbhakarn's sane advice now, the calamitous events leading to the horrible war, bloodshed and rout of the demon clan would have been avoided.]

तत्रागतो भागवतप्रधानो विभीषणो बुद्धिमतां वरिष्ठः।
श्रीरामपादद्वय एकतानः प्रणम्य देवारिमुपोपविष्टः।। 20।।

tatrāgato bhāgavatapradhāno vibhīṣaṇo buddhimatāṃ variṣṭhaḥ /
śrīrāmapādadvaya ekatānaḥ praṇamya devārimupopaviṣṭaḥ //

Just at that time, Vibhishan—who was one among the chief devotees of the Lord, erudite, sagacious and the best in wisdom—came there. His internal inclinations and concentration of the mind were focused on the twin holy feet of Sri Ram. He bowed before the enemy of Gods, Ravana, and sat down near him (20).

विलोक्य कुम्भश्रवणादिदैत्यान्मत्तप्रमत्तानतिविस्मयेन।
विलोक्य कामातुरमप्रमत्तो दशाननं प्राह विशुद्धबुद्धिः।।21।।

vilokya kumbhaśravaṇādidaityānmattapramattānativismayena /
vilokya kāmāturamapramatto daśānanaṃ prāha viśuddhabuddhiḥ //

Settling down, he looked full of astonishment, bewilderment and bemusement at Kumbhakarn and all other haughty and arrogant

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demons intoxicated with pride. He also saw (observed) that Ravana is overcome with lust (and because of it he will listen to no one). But since Vibhishan's intellect and mind were pure and incorrupt, and he was aware of his moral duties and responsibilities, he said to the 10-headed one (Ravana) (21)—

विभीषण उवाच

न कुम्भकर्णेन्द्रजितौ च राजंस्तथा महापार्श्वमहोदरौ तौ।
निकुम्भकुम्भौ च तथातिकायः स्थातुं न शक्ता युधि राघवस्य।।22।।

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

na kumbhakarṇendrajitau ca rājaṃstathā mahāpārśvamahodarau tau /
nikumbhakumbhau ca tathātikāyaḥ sthāstu na śaktā yudhi rāghavasya //

Vibhishan said, 'Oh king! Kumbhakarn, Indrajeet, Mahaparshva, Mahodar, Nikumbh, Kumbh, Atikai etc.—none of them can stand their ground in front of Raghav (Sri Ram) in the battle field during the war (22).

सीताभिधानेन महाग्रहेण ग्रस्तोऽसि राजन् न च ते विमोक्षः।
तामेव सत्कृत्य महाधनेन दत्त्वाभिरामाय सुखी भव त्वम्।।23।।

sītābhidhānena mahāgraheṇa grato'si rājan na ca te vimokṣaḥ /
tāmeva satkṛtya mahādhanena dattvābhirāmāya sukhī bhava tvam //

Oh king! A dreadfully terrible, uncompromising and malignant star in the form of Sita has caught hold of you (literally, swallowed or eclipsed your wisdom and discriminatory faculty). You cannot get rid of it in this way (i.e. in the way you are being advised by your ministers—that is, by adopting a confrontationist and belligerent attitude, with a foolish bid to take on Sri Ram in the battle field. You are literally digging your own grave). Now you should return her to Sri Ram with full honours, along with a lot of precious gifts, and become happy, carefree and fearless thereafter (23).

यावन्न रामस्य शिताः शिलीमुखा लङ्कामभिव्याप्य शिरांसि रक्षसाम्।
छिन्दन्ति तावद्रघुनायकस्य भोस्तां जानकीं त्वं प्रतिदातुमर्हसि।।24।।

yāvanna rāmasya śitāḥ śilīmukhā
laṅkāmabhivyāpya śirāṃsi rakṣasām /
chindanti tāvadraghunāyakasya bhostāṃ
jānakīṃ tvaṃ pratidātumarhasi //

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Before Sri Ram's sharp, piercing and potent arrows spread over Lanka and severe the heads of the demons, it is prudent, wise and advisable that you surrender her in time before its too late (i.e. give Sita back, or hand her over to Sri Ram) (24).

यावन्नगाभाः कपयो महाबला हरीन्द्रतुल्या नखदंष्ट्रयोधिनः।
लङ्कां समाक्रम्य विनाशयन्ति ते तावद्द्रुतं देहि रघुत्तमाय ताम्।। 25।।

yāvannagābhāḥ kapayo mahābalā
harindratulyā nakhadaṃṣṭrayodhinaḥ /
laṅkāṃ samākramya vināśayanti te
tāvaddrutaṃ dehi raghūttamāya tām //

Before the time those colossus, mountain-like monkeys—who fight with their nails and jaws as arms and weapons, and who are most strong, dreadful and as ferocious as the lion—invade, spread and go berserk all over Lanka to ransack and destroy it, you should hand her (Sita) over to the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) as soon as possible (25).

जीवन्न रामेण विमोक्ष्यसे त्वं गुप्तः सुरेन्द्रैरपि शङ्करेण।
न देवराजाङ्कगतो न मृत्योः पाताललोकानपि सम्प्रविष्टः।।26।।

jīvanna rāmeṇa vimokṣyase tvaṃ guptaḥ surendrairapi śaṅkareṇa /
na devarājāṅkagato na mṛtyoḥ pātālalokānapi sampraviṣṭaḥ //

Otherwise, even if Indra (the king of Gods) and Lord Shiva (the annihilator of the creation and Ravana's patron God) extend their protection to you, and even if Indra and Death (here, death has been personified; refers to Yam, the God of death) try protecting you by lifting you in their laps affectionately, or even if you enter (hide yourself) in the Patal Loka (i.e. the subterranean world, the nether world)—still you cannot hope to escape (survive) from the wrath of Sri Ram' (26).

शुभं हितं पवित्रं च विभीषणवचः खलः। प्रतिजग्राह नैवासौ म्रियमाण इवौषधम्।। 27।।
कालेन नोदितो दैत्यो विभीषणमथाब्रवीत्। मद्दत्तभोगैः पुष्टाङ्गो मत्समीपे वसन्नपि।।28।।
प्रतीपमाचरत्येष ममैव हितकारिणः। मित्रभावेन शत्रुर्मे जातो नास्त्यत्र संशयः।।29।।

śubhaṃ hitaṃ pavitraṃ ca vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ khalaḥ /
pratijagrāha naivāsau mriyamāṇa ivauṣadham //
kālena nodito daityo vibhīṣaṇamathābravīt /
maddattabhogaiḥ puṣṭāṅgo matsamīpe vasannapi //

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pratīpamācaratyeṣa mamaiva hitakāriṇaḥ /
mitrabhāvena śatrurme jāto nāstyatra saṃśayaḥ //

The auspicious, welfare-providing, uncorrupt and holy words of sane, wise, prudent, unbiased and selfless advise given by Vibhishan were not accepted by the wicked and pervert Ravana even as medicine is not accepted by a person who is destined to die. Inspired by (or instigated, motivated or impelled by) death, that rascal demon said disdainfully to Vibhishan, 'This fellow has been nourished (has become healthy, literally) by comforts (i.e. nourishment) provided by me, he stays with me (28), but still adopts a posture against me who am his well-wisher (and elder brother). Without doubt, he is born as my enemy in the disguise of a friend (and brother) (29).

अनार्येण कृतघ्नेन सङ्गतिर्मे न युज्यते। विनाशमभिकाङ्क्षन्ति ज्ञातीनां ज्ञातयः सदा।। 30।।
योऽन्यस्त्वेवंविधं ब्रूयाद्वाक्यमेकं निशाचरः।
हन्मि तस्मिन् क्षणे एव धिक् त्वां रक्षः कुलाधमम्।। 31।।

anāryeṇa kṛtaghnena saṅgatirme na yujyate /
vināśamabhikāṅkṣanti jñātīnāṃ jñātayaḥ sadā //
yo'nyastvevaṃvidhaṃ brūyādvākyamekaṃ niśācaraḥ /
hanmi tasmin kṣaṇe eva dhik tvāṃ rakṣaḥ kulādhamam //

This 'non-Arya' (meaning one who is of a low birth and pedigree), who is a thankless, ungrateful and disloyal fellow, should not stay with me—it will be improper. It is usually seen that people belonging to a particular caste, race, class, clan, vocation or profession always wish for the destruction of there own brethrens, compatriots, comrades or peers (out of jealousy and envy, professional rivalry or other malefic considerations as well as their desire to remain superior and unchallenged) (30). If some other demon had said or uttered such words, I would have slayed him in a second. Oh you wretched one, shame to you! You are most lowly, condemned, loathsome, detestable, vile and reprehensible in the entire demon race' (31).

रावणेनैवमुक्तः सन्परुषं स विभीषणः। उत्पपात सभामध्याद्गदापाणिर्महाबलः।। 32।।
चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं गगनस्थोऽब्रवीद्वचः। क्रोधेन महताविष्टो रावणं दशकन्धरम्।
मा विनाशमुपैहि त्वं प्रियवादिनमेव माम्।। 33।।
धिक्करोषि तथापि त्वं ज्येष्ठो भ्राता पितुः समः। कालो राघवरूपेण जातो दशरथालये।।34।।

rāvaṇenaivamuktaḥ sanparuṣaṃ sa vibhīṣaṇaḥ /
utpapāta sabhāmadhyādgadāpāṇirmahābalaḥ //

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caturbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ gaganastho'bravidvacaḥ /
krodhena mahatāviṣṭo rāvaṇaṃ daśakandharam /
mā vināśamupaihi tvaṃ priyavādinameva mām //
dhikkaroṣi tathāpi tvaṃ jyeṣṭho bhrātā pituḥ samaḥ /
kālo rāghavarūpeṇa jāto daśarathālaye //

When Ravana had said such scornful and outrageous words full of reproach, contempt and rancour, the most strong and valorous Vibhishan (felt indignant and embarrassed, so he) took his baton (mace, club) and flew (went up in the sky) from the court (32).

He was accompanied by his four ministers. From the sky he said angrily to the 10-headed Ravana in disgust and dismay (33)—'You put me to shame and scold me most reproachfully even though I wish to tell you about your own welfare. Inspite of it, I still wish that you are not ruined because you are my elder brother, hence are equivalent to my father. Your death has manifested itself in the form of Raghav (Sri Ram) in the household of Dashrath (34).

[Note :—See also Canto 3, verse no. 5.]

काली सीताभिधानेन जाता जनकनन्दिनी। तावुभावागतावत्र भूमेर्भारापनुत्तये।। 35।।
तेनैव प्रेरितस्त्वं तु न शृणोषि हितं मम। श्रीरामः प्रकृतेः साक्षात्परस्तात्सर्वदा स्थितः।। 36।।
बहिरन्तश्च भूतानां समः सर्वत्र संस्थितः। नामरूपादिभेदेन तत्तन्मय इवामलः।। 37।।

kālī sītābhidhānena jātā janakanandinī /
tāvubhāvāgatāvatra bhūrmebhārāpanuttaye //
tenaiva preritastvaṃ tu na śṛṇoṣi hitaṃ mama /
śrīrāmaḥ prakṛteḥ sākṣātparastātsarvadā sthitaḥ //
bahirantaśca bhūtānāṃ samaḥ sarvatra saṃsthitaḥ /
nāmarūpādibhedena tattanmaya ivāmalaḥ //

The cosmic destructive power called 'Kali' (literally the black goddess of death) has been born as Sita, the daughter of Janak. Both of them (Sri Ram and Sita) have come here to remove the burden of the world (35).

It is due to their delusion-creating inspiration that you do not pay heed to my words of sane advice which I speak for your own well-being and welfare. Sri Ram is always beyond the comprehension/grasp/influence of Nature called 'Prakriti' (36).

He is present equally and uniformly both outside as well as inside the creature (i.e. there is nothing that is not pervaded by the supreme

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Soul that the Lord represents; there is nothing that is beyond the Lord and not touched by him; there is nothing that is independent of him and has an existence which is distinct from the Lord). Though he is eternally pure, blemish free and non-dual, he still appears to have different forms and names, such as the myriad varieties of creatures and the vibrant forms of Nature, because of illusions and deceptions created by ignorance of his truthful identity (37).

यथा नानाप्रकारेषु वृक्षेष्वेको महानलः। तत्तदाकृतिभेदेन भिद्यतेऽज्ञानचक्षुषाम्।। 38।।
पञ्चकोशादिभेदेन तत्तन्मय इवाबभौ। नीलपीतादियोगेन निर्मलः स्फटिको यथा।। 39।।

yathā nānāprakāreṣu vṛkṣeṣveko mahānalaḥ /
tattadākṛtibhedena bhidyate'jñānacakṣuṣām //
pañcakośādibhedena tattanmaya ivābabhau /
nīlapītādiyogena nirmalaḥ sphaṭiko yathā //

Just like the same life-giving energy of the great fire called 'Mahaanal' appears to manifest itself in different forms in various trees and plants of myriad forms, sizes, colours and shapes to an ignorant one, or just like a pure, colourless crystal appears to have (i.e. assume) different hues and shades of colour such as blue, yellow etc. due to its proximity with them (though it has no colour of its own)—similarly, the Atma (the soul which is pure, attributeless, faultless, formless and nameless) appears to have different and myriad forms with as many names based on different permutations and combinations of the five elements which form the vital sheaths, called the 'Panch Kosh', covering the soul (38-39).

[Note :—It is pertinent to describe the Atma and the five Koshas or 'Kosh Panch Kosha' consisting of the five elements as per Vedantic concept. The reader should also refer to Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 28-34, and Sundar Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 17-22 in this context. A separate appendix no.2 of the book describes this concept in great detail along with explanatory diagrams.

Briefly, the five elements referred to above are these—sky/space, air/wind, fire/energy, water and earth. These combine in various proportions and ratios to manifest themselves in the form of the creation as we know it.

Atma—This is the pure-self, pure consciousness which is a microscopic reflection of the vast macrocosmic soul. The Atma provides life or consciousness to the inert layers of matter consisting of the five elements of air, water, space, fire and earth which crystalise to form the five coverings or sheaths around the pure Atma, and together (the Atma and

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the five sheaths) they create what we call the living being, whether plant, animal or humans.

The Panch Kosha—Or the five sheaths covering the Atma are as follows—(i) The food sheath; (ii) the vital air sheath; (iii) the mental sheath; (iv) the intellectual sheath; (v) and the bliss sheath.

The Food Sheath—Is the physical body and derives its name because it is nourished by the food eaten by the creature. It consists of five organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals, anus).

The Vital Air Sheath—Is the five-fold faculties of perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), excretion (faeces, urine, sperm, sputum, sweat etc.), digestion (stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix), circulation (blood stream, artery, vein, capillary, heart) and thinking (the power to entertain, absorb and assimilate new information and thought).

The Mental Sheath—It consists of the equipment which receives external stimuli through the sense organs and links it to the organs of action. Integrated response of body to the stimuli is done through the mind sheath. It is a continuous flow of thoughts.

The Intellect Sheath—It acts as a controlling mechanism over the mind; It regulates, filters and modifies the response to the various stimuli. It has the discriminatory power which the mind, left alone to it, lacks.

The mental and intellect sheaths have no physical form. They are like software of a computer vis-ë-vis the food and vital sheaths which resemble the hardware paraphernalia of the entire system.

The Bliss Sheath—Is the innermost sheath surrounding the Atma/the soul. It consists of 'inherent tendencies' or 'Vasanas' before they are manifested into thoughts or actions. The intellect, mind etc. perform under the guidance and control of the bliss sheath. It is so-called because an individual experiences relative bliss, peace and tranquility when he is associated with it.]

स एव नित्यमुक्तोऽपि स्वमायागुणबिम्बितः। कालः प्रधानं पुरुषोऽव्यक्तं चेति चतुर्विधः॥40॥
प्रधानपुरुषाभ्यां स जगत्कृत्स्नं सृजत्यजः। कालरूपेण कलनां जगतः कुरुतेऽव्ययः॥41॥

sa eva nityamukto'pi svamāyāguṇabimbitaḥ /
kālaḥ pradhānaṃ puruṣo'vyaktaṃ ceti caturvidhaḥ //
pradhānapuruṣābhyāṃ sa jagatkṛtsnaṃ sṛjatyajaḥ /
kālarūpeṇa kalanāṃ jagataḥ kurute'vyayaḥ //

He (the supreme and transcendental Lord who has manifested as Sri Ram), inspite of being eternally free from all attachments, fetters of all kinds, blemishes, honours and attributes, reflects himself in (or

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acts through) his delusion creating powers called Maya and its various qualities. As a consequence, he is recognised or known by 4 names—viz. (a) 'Kaal' (time, circumstance, death), (b) 'Pradhaan' (the chief, the Lord, the most superior one), (c) 'Purush' (the primary Male aspect of Nature, the Viraat Purush), and (d) 'Abyakta' (one who cannot be described, who is beyond comprehension, is unqualified and unquantified, one who is un-manifest, invisible, untold and unknown). [The four words represent the different qualities or virtues that are used to describe the same universal Lord, and these names indicate that though the Lord is one, Maya-induced ignorance has inspired the man to assign these names to the immutable Lord.] (40).

Though he is without a birth or beginning himself, he creates the rest of the entire creation as the 'Chief Male' creator called Pradhaan Purush. Though he himself is imperishable, indestructible and without an end, he annihilates the universe, which is his image, in his form as Kaal (41).

कालरूपी स भगवान् रामरूपेण मायया।। 42।।
ब्रह्मणा प्रार्थितो देवस्त्वद्वधार्थमिहागतः। तदन्यथा कथं कुर्यात्सत्यसङ्कल्प ईश्वरः।। 43।।

kālarūpī sa bhagavān rāmarūpeṇa māyayā//
brahmaṇā prārthito devastvadvadhārthamihāgataḥ/
tadanyathā kathaṃ kuryātsatyasaṅkalpa īśvaraḥ//

The same Lord who is Kaal personified has come in the guise of Sri Ram to kill you at the behest (i.e. on the prayers) of Brahma. The supreme Lord God is true to his words, so how can he forgo his promises made to the Gods (42-43).

[Note :—Verse nos. 37-43 can be called the Gospel of Vibhishan for Ravana.]

हनिष्यति त्वां रामस्तु सपुत्रबलवाहनम्। हन्यमानं न शक्नोमि द्रष्टुं रामेण रावण।। 44।।
त्वां राक्षसकुलं कृत्स्नं ततो गच्छमि राघवम्। मयि याते सुखीभूत्वा रमस्व भवने चिरम्।।45।।

haniṣyati tvāṃ rāmastu saputrabalavāhanam/
hanyamānaṃ na śaknomi draṣṭuṃ rāmeṇa rāvaṇa//
tvāṃ rākṣasakulaṃ kṛtsnaṃ tato gacchāmi rāghavam/
mayi yāte sukhībhūtvā ramasva bhavane ciram//

Therefore, it is for certain that Sri Ram will kill you along with your sons and army, and destroy your regal paraphernalia, such as your vehicles etc. Oh Ravana! I cannot afford to see the ruin and

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destruction of the entire demon race at the hands of Sri Ram. Hence, I am going to Raghav (Sri Ram). After I go from here, you can enjoy life and its comforts for a long time in your palace' (44-45).

विभीषणो रावणवाक्यतः क्षणाद्विसृज्य सर्वं सपरिच्छदं गृहम्।
जगाम रामस्य पदारविन्दयोः सेवाभिकाङ्क्षी परिपूर्णमानसः।। 46।।

vibhīṣaṇo rāvaṇavākyataḥ kṣaṇā-
dvisrjya sarvaṃ saparicchadaṃ gṛham /
jagāma rāmasya padāravindayoḥ
sevābhikāṅkṣī paripūrṇamānasaḥ //

In this manner, Vibhishan left his household along with all its material contents and comforts due to the public rebuke and reproachful words of Ravana, and with a contented and peaceful mind, he went to Sri Ram to serve his lotus-like holy feet (46).

[Note :—The reason why Vibhishan has gone to join Sri Ram's camp has more to do with trying to save his skin from almost certain death at the hands of Ravana or other demons if he now remained at Lanka, because he has openly sided with Sri Ram who was considered an arch enemy of the demons as is clear by his own words in verse nos. 44-45, 24-25 of this Canto and verse no. 5 of Canto 3, than his devotion and dedication for Sri Ram. The reader should note that no where has Hanuman met Vibhishan and found him deeply devoted and eager to meet Sri Ram as has been depicted by Tulsidas in his epic Ram Charit Manas. The fact that he changed sides as a clever move to save himself is proved by the fact that all the advisors of Sri Ram were wary of accepting him in their camp (Canto 3, verse nos. 7-9), and neither had Hanuman—while conveying the news of Lanka to Sri Ram—as much as even mentioned in passing that a gentleman-demon called Vibhishan, who is a devotee, is also under captivity in Lanka, and that he too should be liberated along with Sita. Under normal circumstances, it should have been the case. But the fact is that Hanuman did not find any element of devotion and dedication to Sri Ram in Vibhishan that would merit mention before Sri Ram while briefing him about Lanka. This leads us to the conclusion that Vibhishan was being more wise, clever, prudent and practical than being devoted to Sri Ram, though it will be wrong to say that he was totally devoid of devotion or was selfish in his decision to exit Lanka, because he changed sides knowing fully well who Sri Ram was (see verse nos. 34-35, 37-43), and that he was abandoning unrighteousness in favour of righteousness and could not be a witness to the ruin of his own clan because of recklessness of a single person, Ravana (see verse nos. 21, 27, 44-45).]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 3

Vibhishan joins Sri Ram's camp; Ocean's stubbornness; Construction of the bridge

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

विभीषणो महाभागश्चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः सह। आगत्य गगने रामसम्मुखे समवस्थितः।।1।।
उच्चैरुवाच भोः स्वामिन् राम राजीवलोचन। रावणस्यानुजोऽहं ते दारहर्तुर्विभीषणः।।2।।
नाम्ना भ्रात्रा निरस्तोऽहं त्वामेव शरणं गतः। हितमुक्तं मया देव तस्य चाविदितात्मनः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

vibhīṣaṇo mahābhāgaścaturbhirmantribhiḥ saha /
āgatya gagane rāmasammukhe samavasthitaḥ //
uccairuvāca bhoḥ svāmin rāma rājīvalocana /
rāvaṇasyānujo'haṃ te dāraharturvibhīṣaṇaḥ //
nāmnā bhrātā nirasto'haṃ tvāmeva śaraṇaṃ gataḥ /
hitamuktaṃ mayā deva tasya cāviditātmanaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Thereafter, the fortunate Vibhishan came, along with his four ministers, and presented himself before Sri Ram as he stood in the sky in front of the latter (1).

He said with a raised voice, 'Oh Lord, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram! I am the younger brother of Ravana who has stolen (abducted) your wife (2). My name is Vibhishan. I have been thrown out (after being rebuked, insulted, castigated and publicly humiliated) by my own brother; that is why I have come to seek shelter and refuge in your holy feet. Oh Lord! I have only spoken for the welfare of that ignorant fellow (Ravana) (3).

[Note :—(i) Verse no. 3 above and 5 below clearly tell us the reason for Vibhishan joining Sri Ram's camp. After being subjected to public scorn and humiliation by Ravana in open court, Vibhishan had no choice except to protect his dignity and self respect by turning away from Ravana. Please also see Canto 2, verse no. 46. (ii) The way Vibhishan has come is very divergent from the way he is mentioned to do so in Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas. Here he has come directly by the sky path and presented himself before Sri Ram, but Tulsidas' version says that he had stopped outside the camp, a messenger was sent to Sri Ram, and then he was summened to present himself and his credentials.]

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सीतां रामाय वैदेहीं प्रेषयेति पुनः पुनः। उक्तोऽपि न शृणोत्येव कालपाशवशं गतः।।4।।
हन्तुं मां खड्गमादाय प्रादुरवद्राक्षसाधमः। ततोऽचिरेण सचिवैश्चतुर्भिः सहितो भयात्।।5।।
त्वामेव भवमोक्षाय मुमुक्षुः शरणं गतः। विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा सुग्रीवो वाक्यमब्रवीत्।।6।।

sītāṃ rāmāya vaidehīṃ preṣayeti punaḥ punaḥ /
ukto'pi na śṛṇotyeva kālapāśavaśaṃ gataḥ //
hantuṃ māṃ khaḍgamādāya prādravadrākṣasādhamaḥ /
tato'cireṇa sacivaiścaturbhiḥ sahito bhayāt //
tvāmeva bhavamokṣāya mumukṣuḥ śaraṇaṃ gataḥ /
vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā sugrīvo vākyamabravīt //

I had told (advised) him repeatedly that he (Ravana) should send Vaidehi (Sita) to Sri Ram, but being under the spell of impending death, he wouldn't listen to any sane and rational advise (4). Presently the wretched and lowly demon rushed to kill me with a sword. Then, out of fear, I took four of my ministers with me (5), and in order to free myself from the fetters of this mundane existence that shackle me, I renounced every attachment and have finally come to seek shelter and refuge in your holy feet'. Hearing these words of Vibhishan, Sugriv said (6)—

[Note :—Verse no. 6 does not give a different reason for Vibhishan coming to Sri Ram. It highlights the fact that a creature seeks the shelter and refuge of the Lord when it is scorned, rebuked, castigated and humiliated by the world, by those whom the creature had hitherto called its own kith and kin. This selfishness, scorn and reproach fills it with renunciation, detachment and dispassion, and it turns towards the Lord. Such awareness also turned the cruel robber Valmiki into a great sage and prince Dhruv into a great devotee of the Lord.]

विश्वासार्हो न ते राम मायावी राक्षसाधमः। सीताहर्तुर्विशेषेण रावणस्यानुजो बली।।7।।
मन्त्रिभिः सायुधैरस्मान् विवरे निहनिष्यति। तदाज्ञापय मे देव वानरैर्हन्यतामयम्।।8।।

viśvāsārho na te rāma māyāvī rākṣasādhamaḥ /
sītāharturviśeṣeṇa rāvaṇasyānujo balī //
mantribhiḥ sāyudhairasmān vivare nihaniṣyati /
tadājñāpaya me deva vānarairhanyatāmayam //

'Oh Sri Ram! We should not believe and rely upon this wicked and lowly demon who is deceitful, a cunning imposter and full of dirty tricks. (If he had been somebody else, it would have been different, but—) He is the younger brother of the abductor of Sita, i.e. Ravana, and looks strong (7). He, along with his armed ministers, will

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kill us whenever he finds us alone. So, oh Lord, if you give me permission, I shall get him killed by the monkeys (8).

ममैवं भाति ते राम बुद्ध्या किं निश्चितं वद। श्रुत्वा सुग्रीववचनं रामः सस्मितमब्रवीत्।। 9।।
यदीच्छामि कपिश्रेष्ठ लोकान्सर्वान्सहेश्वरान्। निमिषार्धेन संहन्यां सृजामि निमिषार्धतः।। 10।।
अतो मयाभयं दत्तं शीघ्रमानय राक्षसम्।। 11।।

mamaivaṃ bhāti me rāma buddhyā kiṃ niścitaṃ vada /
śrutvā sugrīvavacanaṃ rāmaḥ sasmitamabravīt //
yadīcchāmi kapiśreṣṭha lokānsarvānsaheśvarān /
nimiṣārdhena saṃhanyāṃ sṛjāmi nimiṣārdhataḥ //
ato mayābhayaṃ dattaṃ śīghramānaya rākṣasam //

Oh Sri Ram! I think this will be a proper and wise course of action. What is your decision in this connection? Do tell us'.

Hearing these words of Sugriv, Sri Ram said reassuring with a sweet and pleasant smile (9), 'Oh the best among the monkeys! If I wish, I can destroy the entire world along with its Lokpals (patron Gods and guardians of the world) in half a second and can create them equally easily in another half a second. Hence, you should not worry at all. I am giving this demon 'freedom from fear' as a blessing. Go and bring him here soon (10-11).

सकृदेव प्रपन्नाय तवास्मीति च याचते। अभयं सर्वभूतेभ्यो ददाम्येतद्व्रतं मम।। 12।।
रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा सुग्रीवो हृष्टमानसः। विभीषणमथानाय्य दर्शयामास राघवम्।। 13।।

sakṛdeva prapannāya tavāsmīti ca yācate /
abhayaṃ sarvabhūtebhyo dadāmyetadvrataṃ mama //
rāmasya vacanaṃ śrutvā sugrīvo hṛṣṭamānasaḥ /
vibhīṣaṇamathānāyya darśayāmāsa rāghavam //

It is my established tradition (or a stern vow, a cardinal principle, a regular practice or rule of thumb) that anyone who comes to me and says even once 'I am yours' and asks for freedom from fear, I make him fearless from all the creatures' (12).

Hearing these words, Sugriv brought Vibhishan and introduced him to Raghav (Sri Ram) most cheerfully and without any further doubts in his mind (13).

विभीषणस्तु साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्य रघूत्तमम्। हर्षगद्गदया वाचा भक्त्या च परयान्वितः।। 14।।
रामं श्यामं विशालाक्षं प्रसन्नमुखपङ्कजम्। धनुर्बाणधरं शान्तं लक्ष्मणेन समन्वितम्।।15।।
कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा स्तोतुं समुपचक्रमे।। 16।।

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vibhīṣaṇastu sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatya raghūttamam /
harṣagadgadayā vācā bhaktyā ca parayānvitaḥ //
rāmaṃ śyāmaṃ viśālākṣaṃ prasannamukhapaṅkajam /
dhanurbāṇadharaṃ śāntaṃ lakṣmaṇena samanvitam //
kṛtāñjaliputo bhūtvā stotuṃ samupacakrame //

Vibhishan prostrated himself reverentially before Sri Ram to show his respects, became overwhelmed with delight and joy, and began to say prayers with an emotionally chocked throat and overwhelmed heart which was full of devotion for the magnanimous and merciful Lord. He said with palms joined together in submission in honour of Sri Ram—who is an embodiment of peace, tranquility and serenity, whose lotus-like face always remains benign, pleasant and cheerful, who is dark complexioned, who has broad eyes, and who bears a bow and an arrow—along with Laxman (14-16).

विभीषण उवाच

नमस्ते राम राजेन्द्र नमः सीतामनोरम। नमस्ते चण्डकोदण्ड नमस्ते भक्तवत्सल।।17।।
नमोऽनन्ताय शान्ताय रामायामिततेजसे। सुग्रीवमित्राय च ते रघूणां पतये नमः।।18।।

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

namaste rāma rājendra namaḥ sītāmanorama /
namaste caṇḍakodaṇḍa namaste bhaktavatsala //
namo'nantāya śāntāya rāmāyāmitatejase /
sugrīvamitrāya ca te raghūṇāṃ pataye namaḥ //

Vibhishan said, 'Oh the King of kings, Sri Ram! I bow before you (to pay my respects and honour). Oh the one who resides in the heart of Sita! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the invincible and formidable archer holding an invincible and formidable bow! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the one who is compassionate, benevolent, munificent, benignant and endearing towards his devotees! I bow reverentially before you (17).

I bow before Sri Ram who has no end, is tranquil, peaceful and serene, is unique and matchless in divine splendour, radiance, brilliance, glow of divine energy and majestic powers, is a friend of Sugriv, and is the leader of king Raghu's clan (18).

जगदुत्पत्तिनाशानां कारणाय महात्मने। त्रैलोक्यगुरवेऽनादिगृहस्थाय नमो नमः।।19।।
त्वमादिर्जगतां राम त्वमेव स्थितिकारणम्। त्वमन्ते निधनस्थानं स्वेच्छाचारस्त्वमेव हि।।20।।

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jagadutpattināśānāṃ kāraṇāya mahātmane /
trailokyagurave'nādigṛhasthāya namo namaḥ //
tvamādirjagatāṃ rāma tvameva sthitikāraṇam /
tvamante nidhanasthānaṃ svecchācārastvameva hi //

I repeatedly bow reverentially before you who are a great and exalted soul, are the cause (source) of the creation as well as annihilation of the world, are the Guru (a wise and enlightened teacher, a moral preceptor, an erudite and learned guide, and the one who is the most wise and enlightened) of the Triloki (the three worlds consisting of the subterranean, terrestrial and celestial worlds), and are a householder since time immemorial[1] (19).

Oh Sri Ram! You are the cause of creation and existence of this world, and at the end of it you are the place where it goes back (i.e. merges into or coalesces into) at the time of annihilation (the doomsday). You move around as per your own wish (20).

[Note :—[1]The Lord has been called a householder since ancient times because as Viraat Purush, the male aspect of the cosmos and creation, he is associated with Nature, the female aspect, ever since the beginning of creation, and he looks after it as any householder would look after his family which is the creation in his case. In other words, he sustains, nourishes and takes care of this world ever since its creation. In this role, the Viraat Purush has been called Lord Vishnu and Nature or Prakriti has been called Laxmi. That same Vishnu has manifested himself as Ram while Laxmi has come as Sita.]

चराचराणां भूतानां बहिरन्तश्च राघव। व्याप्यव्यापकरूपेण भवान् भाति जगन्मयः।। 21।।
त्वन्मायया हृतज्ञाना नष्टात्मानो विचेतसः। गतागतं प्रपद्यन्ते पापपुण्यवशात्सदा।। 22।।

carācarāṇāṃ bhūtānāṃ bahirantaśca rāghava /
vyāpyavyāpakarūpeṇa bhavān bhāti jaganmayaḥ //
tvanmāyayā hṛtajñānā naṣṭātmāno vicetasaḥ /
gatāgataṃ prapadyante pāpapuṇyavaśātsadā //

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! You pervade both inside and outside the whole creation consisting of the five elements (space, air, fire, water, earth). [That is, you encompass as well as are encompassed by all the animate as well as the inanimate world which is made up of the above elements. See canto 2, verse no.38-41 also.] As a result, the whole universe appears to be a manifestation of your own self, or it is an image which reflects you (21).

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Those foolish, lowly, stupid and ignorant persons, whose wisdom, intelligence and discrimination powers have been eclipsed by your deluding and illusive force called Maya, are constantly and repeatedly arriving and departing, i.e. take birth and die repeatedly in this mundane, artificial, deluding and entrapping world depending upon their righteous or unrighteous deeds, thoughts and demeanors (22).

तावत्सत्यं जगद्भाति शुक्तिकारजतं यथा। यावन्न ज्ञायते ज्ञानं चेतसानन्यगामिना।। 23।।
त्वदज्ञानात्सदा युक्ताः पुत्रदारगृहादिषु। रमन्ते विषयान्सर्वानन्ते दुःखप्रदान्विभो।। 24।।

tāvatsatyaṃ jagadbhāti śuktikārajataṃ tathā /
yāvanna jñāyate jñānaṃ cetasānanyagāminā //
tvadajñānātsadā yuktāḥ putradāragṛhādiṣu /
ramante viṣayānsarvānante duḥkhapradānvibho //

As long as (i.e. till the time) a person does not concentrate his mental faculties and realises and understands your true form representing pure enlightenment, wisdom and knowledge as well as the pure consciousness, he continues to regard this world as being true just like one mistakenly thinks that there is silver that glistens inside an oyster shell. [The moon or sun light reflects from the oyster shell's inner layer and it appears to simmer with a silvery light, but it is only an optical illusion.] (23).

Oh Vibho (omnipresent, almighty, all-pervading, magnanimous, eternal Lord)! It is because the people are ignorant of you and your true form that they are engrossed in and infatuated and attached with their worldly ties such as their sons, wives and homestead etc., and try to find happiness and peace in the objects of this materialistic but perishable world which ultimately give them sorrows and anguish in return (24).

त्वमिन्द्रोऽग्निर्यमो रक्षो वरुणश्च तथानिलः। कुबेरश्च तथा रुद्रस्त्वमेव पुरुषोत्तम।। 25।।
त्वमणोरप्यणीयांश्च स्थूलात् स्थूलतरः प्रभो।
त्वं पिता सर्वलोकानां माता धाता त्वमेव हि।।26।।

tvamindro'gniryamo rakṣo varuṇaśca tathānilaḥ /
kuberaśca tathā rudrastvameva puruṣottama //
tvamaṇorapyaṇīyāṃśca sthūlāt sthūlataraḥ prabho /
tvaṃ pitā sarvalokānāṃ mātā dhātā tvameva hi //

Oh the most exalted and the best among males ('Purshottam', an

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epithet for Vishnu)! You are Indra (the king of Gods), the Fire, Yam (the patron God of death), Raksho (literally, the one who protects; also means God, 'good luck' personified), Varun (the patron God of water), the Wind God, Kuber (the treasurer of Gods) and Rudra (one of the eleven forms of Shiva; synonymous with annihilation of the creation) (25).

Oh Lord! You are minute than an atom and larger than the greatest of creation. You are the father, the mother and the nourisher as well as the bearer of the entire creation (26).

आदिमध्यान्तरहितः परिपूर्णोऽच्युतोऽव्ययः। त्वं पाणिपादरहितश्चक्षुःश्रोत्रविवर्जितः।। 27।।
श्रोता द्रष्टा ग्रहीता च जवनस्त्वं खरान्तक। कोशेभ्यो व्यतिरिक्तस्त्वं निर्गुणो निरुपाश्रयः।।28।।

ādimadhyāntarahitaḥ paripūrṇo'cyuto'vyayaḥ/
tvaṃ pāṇipādarahitaścakṣuḥśrotravivarjitaḥ//
śrotā draṣṭā grahitā ca javanastvaṃ kharāntaka/
kośebhyo vyatiriktastvaṃ nirguṇo nirupāśrayaḥ//

You are without a beginning, middle or an end. You are always uniformly complete, eternal and imperishable, and infinite and limitless. You are have no physical organs such as hands and legs or eyes and nose (because you are formless and without attributes) (27). But still, oh the slayer of the demon Khar, you are the one who hears all, sees all, accepts all and are very swift, rapid moving, diligent and agile. You are free from the encumbrances pertaining to the '5-Koshas' (see Canto 2, verse no. 39). You are Nirgun (formless, invisible, without any defining characteristics or attributes called 'Gunas' which is so typifies this world). And you have no abode as such (i.e. you are not fixed or localised to any specific location or habitat, because the whole universe is your abode by the virtue of the fact that you are present in all the 5 elements that constitute the world) (28).

निर्विकल्पो निर्विकारो निराकारो निरीश्वरः। षड्भावरहितोऽनादिः पुरुषः प्रकृतेः परः।। 29।।
मायया गृह्यमाणस्त्वं मनुष्य इव भाव्यसे। ज्ञात्वा त्वां निर्गुणमजं वैष्णवा मोक्षगामिनः।।30।।

nirvikalpo nirvikāro nirākāro nirīśvaraḥ/
ṣaḍbhāvarahito'nādiḥ puruṣaḥ prakṛteḥ paraḥ//
māyayā gṛhyamāṇastvaṃ manuṣya iva bhāvyase/
jñātvā tvāṃ nirguṇamajaṃ vaiṣṇavā mokṣagāminaḥ//

You have no parallel, no match and no alternatives. You are

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without any faults, blemishes, shortcomings and taints. You have no form, no attributes, no names and no qualifying qualities defining you. You are inspired by none and are self driven; you have no Lord above you who can order you to do anything. You are free from the so-called six faults, shortcomings, blemishes or taints associated with this creation and its creatures[1]. You are beyond Nature, called Prakriti. You are the eternal Purush who has no has no beginning or end. [Here 'Purush' means the male aspect of nature or the Viraat Purush that existed even prior to the whole creation coming into being) (29).

You appear to be like an ordinary human being because of the illusion created by your Maya (the delusion creating powers of the Lord). The Vaishanavs (those who worship Lord Vishnu and treat him as the supreme Lord who manifests in the form of various incarnations to rid the world of evil and vices) attain emancipation and salvation by realizing that, in reality, you as are that supreme Lord who is called 'Nirgun', i.e. one who has no Gunas (no attributes and qualifying virtues, either good or bad) and 'Ajanma', i.e. one who has no birth (because he is eternal and imperishable) (30).

[Note :—[1]The six Faults mentioned in verse no. 29 are the problems associated with this gross world that has a physical origin, takes a birth and ultimately ends or dies. Naturally they are not applicable to the supreme Lord who does not take birth and does not die. These so-called 'Vikars' are the following—(1) problems associated with birth, (2) problems associated with growth, (3) problems associated with consequences of deeds done and actions taken by a creature in this world, (4) problems associated with gradual decay and decline of the body and its functions, (5) problems associated with old age and its attendant horrors, and (6) problems associated with the ultimate destruction and end of everything that relates to the creature. One will observe that the life of a creature is a continuous graph of sorrows and pains of one or the other kind. It is only when the creature realises the truth of existence and who he really is that he begins to disassociate himself from the body and the world, and thus is able to break free from this seemingly interminable cycle of horrors.]

अहं त्वत्पादसद्भक्तिनिःश्रेणीं प्राप्य राघव। इच्छामि ज्ञानयोगाख्यं सौधमारोढुमीश्वर।। 31।।
नमः सीतापते राम नमः कारुणिकोत्तम। रावणारे नमस्तुभ्यं त्राहि मां भवसागरात्।। 32।।
ततः प्रसन्नः प्रोवाच श्रीरामो भक्तवत्सलः। वरं वृणीष्व भद्रं ते वाञ्छितं वरदोऽस्म्यहम्।। 33।।

ahaṃ tvatpādasadbhaktiniḥśreṇīṃ prāpya rāghava /
icchāmi jñānayogākhyaṃ saudhamāroḍhumīśvara //

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namaḥ sītāpate rāma namaḥ kāruṇikottama /
rāvaṇāre namastubhyaṃ trāhi māṃ bhavasāgarāt //
tataḥ prasannaḥ provāca śrīrāmo bhaktavatsalaḥ /
varaṃ vṛṇīṣva bhadraṃ te vāñchitaṃ varado'smyaham //

Oh Raghav! I wish to climb up the stairs (or steps of the ladder) representing sincere, steady, everlasting and pure 'Bhakti' (i.e. firm devotion, faith, conviction and belief, having reverence and adoration, worshipping and honouring) in your lotus-like holy feet, in order to reach the pinnacle of the royal palace called 'Gyan Yog' (enlightenment and wisdom acquired through truthful knowledge of the supreme reality) (31).

Oh Sita's dear Lord Sri Ram who is the best among those who are merciful, munificent, benevolent and compassionate! I bow reverentially before you. Oh the slayer or vanquisher of Ravana! I repeatedly bow reverentially before you. You should save me from being submerged and getting drowned in the ocean-like mundane world' (32).

Then Sri Ram, who is endearing, munificent and benevolent towards his devotees and passionately loves them said to Vibhishan most delightedly, 'Oh Vibhishan! You be blessed. I wish to grant you a boon. So ask for whatever you desire' (33).

[Note :—It has been clearly established in verse no. 31 that Bhakti is an important tool or step to climb up the ladder leading up to Gyan—which is self realisation, enlightenment and wisdom as well as acquisition of true knowledge about reality. Bhakti has many aspects and forms, each representing the different steps of the ladder leading to Gyan. The former is only a means to attain the supreme Truth and not an end in itself. Bhakti can be roughly defined as Bhakti—(noun; feminine gender) The concept of Bhakti has a very broad sweep, and it incorporates such glorious virtues as having, inter alia, sincere devotion and firm faith in the Lord, total submission and surrender before the Lord, having unwavering faith, conviction, belief and dedication for the Lord, having reverence and veneration for the Lord, having no other solace, succour, hope and respite except the Lord, treating oneself as a humble servant of the Lord, remembering the Lord at all times and offering each and every deed and action to the Lord, remaining unruffled and calm under all circumstances with the view that these are the wishes of the Lord and one has no right to get overly excited over them. Gyan, on the other hand, is the realisation or awareness that Atma is, inter alia, different from the body, and is the true identity of a creature. This Atma is a very unique

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entity and is called the 'true self' of the creature. Gyan refers to self realisation and attainment of enlightenment about the absolute Truth and Reality in this creation. It encompasses a broad swathe of philosophy which is taught by the Upanishads, called Vedanta. See also Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse no.38-39.

A separate appendix no.2 of this book defines these concepts in detail.]

विभीषण उवाच

धन्योऽस्मि कृतकृत्योऽस्मि कृतकार्योऽस्मि राघव। त्वत्पाददर्शनादेव विमुक्तोऽस्मि न संशयः।। 34।।
नास्ति मत्सदृशो धन्यो नास्ति मत्सदृशः शुचिः। नास्ति मत्सदृशो लोके राम त्वन्मूर्तिदर्शनात्।।35।

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

dhanyo'smi kṛtakṛtyo'smi kṛtakāryo'smi rāghava/
tvatpādadarśanādeva vimukto'smi na saṃśayaḥ//
nāsti matsadṛśo dhanyo nāsti matsadṛśaḥ śuciḥ/
nāsti matsadṛśo loke rāma tvanmūrtidarśanāt//

Vibhishan said, 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! I have become extremely blessed, privileged and fortunate, have achieved the rewards of all my good actions and virtuous deeds, feel fully satisfied and contented, and whatever I had ever desired or was destined to get, I have got them all. I have already become emancipated and liberated from the shackles of this mundane world by having Darshan (divine and august viewing) of your holy feet. [So there is nothing more left for me to desire.] There is no doubt about it (34).

Oh Sri Ram! There is no one more privileged, fortunate and blessed than me because I have had the Darshan of your beautiful, attractive, charming and magnificent image. Now there is no one in this world who can compare himself with me! (35).

कर्मबन्धविनाशाय त्वज्ज्ञानं भक्तिलक्ष्णम्। त्वद्ध्यानं परमार्थं च देहि मे रघुनन्दन।। 36।।
न याचे राम राजेन्द्र सुखं विषयसम्भवम्। त्वत्पादकमले सक्ता भक्तिरेव सदास्तु मे।।37।।

karmabandhavināśāya tvajjñānaṃ bhaktilakṣaṇam/
tvaddhyānaṃ paramārthaṃ ca dehi me raghunandana//
na yāce rāma rājendra sukhaṃ viṣayasambhavam/
tvatpādakamale saktā bhaktireva sadāstu me//

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! [Now Vibhishan makes his request] In order to destroy the fetters that bind me to my deeds and actions in this world, give me, as a blessing or boon, your Bhakti (devotion,

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worship, dedication, adoration, reverence and fellowship) which can lead me to achieve Gyan (enlightenment, wisdom and true knowledge about your divine form and essence). At the same time, bless me so that I can meditate and concentrate, contemplate and focus my attention on your spiritual and non-worldly sublime, ethereal, divine and holy form (36).

Oh the King of kings, Sri Ram! I do not desire any happiness or comforts arising out of the worldly sense objects pertaining to this mundane, materialistic and artificial world which is nevertheless perishable. My only desire is that I must have abiding love, devotion, affection, reverence, dedication, adoration and faith in your lotus-like august and divine feet' (37).

[Note :—Verse nos. 17-37 can be called the gospel of Vibhishan.

The reader must note that, as in all previous gospels included in this Adhyatma Ramayan, emphasis is put on the 'Nirgun' aspect as well as supreme divinity of Sri Ram as the transcendental Lord personified. It is repeatedly pointed out that salvation will not be possible if we worship Sri Ram without understanding his true nature or form. Such worship which lacks wisdom and understanding will be reduced to a mechanical ritual without any substance in it. It will be possible only when we attain enlightenment and self realisation, and understand the true nature of Sri Ram, his immaculate virtues, noble qualities, the values which he stood for, and then inculcate them in our daily lives. We must understand that Sri Ram resides in our very heart as our microcosmic soul as much as he lives in the world outside. This also is the basic tenet or strand running through the whole gamut of Vedant philosophy as well as the treatise called Yog Vashistha. Adhyatma Ramayan lays great stress on the oneness of the soul with the supreme Soul, and the divine nature of Sri Ram vis-ë-vis his worldly activities as a human being. The stress is on the philosophy of Vedanta, on metaphysics and spirituality, the essential non-duality of all that exists, the macrocosmic 'Avyakta' concept of the Lord who is all-encompassing, all-pervading, omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient, who is beyond description, attributes, qualities and definitions, who is invisible to the gross eyes of the body but easily perceptible by the eyes of wisdom and enlightenment, and who is the ultimate Truth and absolute Reality in creation, more than anything else.]

श्रीराम उवाच

ओमित्युक्त्वा पुनः प्रीतो रामः प्रोवाच राक्षसम्। शृणु वक्ष्यामि ते भद्रं रहस्यं मम निश्चितम्।।38।।
मद्भक्तानां प्रशान्तानां योगिनां वीतरागिणाम्। हृदये सीतया नित्यं वसाम्यत्र न संशयः।।39।।

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śrīrāma uvāca

omityuktvā punaḥ prīto rāma provāca rākṣasam /
śṛṇu vakṣyāmi te bhadraṃ rahasyaṃ mama niścitam //
madbhaktānāṃ praśāntānāṃ yogināṃ vītarāgiṇām /
hṛdaye sītayā nityaṃ vasāmyatra na saṃśayaḥ //

Saying 'so be it', Sri Ram became pleased with Vibhishan and said, 'Oh 'Bhadra'(an honourable gentleman who is superior, cultured, wise and attained one amongst his peers)! Listen. I shall tell you one of my most certain but undisclosed or unfamiliar tenets (literally, a secret principle) (38). There is no doubt that I, along with Sita, reside in the heart of my devotees who have a tranquil, placid, serene and calm mind, are dispassionate and detached from this mundane, deluding world consisting of materialistic objects and are deeply steeped in Yoga (meditation, contemplation and concentration on my true form and their own true self) (39).

तस्मात्त्वं सर्वदा शान्तः सर्वकल्मषवर्जितः। मां ध्यात्वा मोक्ष्यसे नित्यं घोरसंसारसागरात्।। 40 ।।
स्तोत्रमेतत्पठेद्यस्तु लिखेद्यः शृणुयादपि। मत्प्रीतये ममाभीष्टं सारूप्यं समवाप्नुयात्।। 41 ।।

tasmāttvaṃ sarvadā śāntaḥ sarvakalmaṣavarjitaḥ /
māṃ dhyātvā mokṣyase nityaṃ ghorasaṃsārasāgarāt //
stotrametatpaṭhedyastu likhedyaḥ śṛṇuyādapi /
matprītaye mamābhiṣṭaṃ sārūpya samavāpnuyāt //

Hence, by constantly, persistently and consistently remembering and concentrating your mind and intellect, your thoughts and attention on me and my sublime and divine form, by always remaining peaceful, serene, calm, tranquil and placid, and by abstaining from all sinful and evil deeds as well as keeping away from vices, bad thoughts, misdemeanors and unrighteousness of all kinds, you will be able to cross this formidable world-like ocean and attain emancipation and salvation (40).

Those persons who write, hear or read this Stotra to please me, attain the exalted stature of being one with me (i.e. they ultimately merge their soul with me and attain final salvation for their soul)' (41).

इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणं प्राह श्रीरामो भक्तभक्तिमान्। पश्यत्विदानीमेवैष मम सन्दर्शने फलम्।। 42 ।।
लङ्काराज्येऽभिषेक्ष्यामि जलमानय सागरत्। यावच्चन्द्रश्च सूर्यश्च यावत्तिष्ठति मेदिनी।। 43 ।।

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यावन्मम कथा लोके तावद्राज्यं करोत्वसौ। इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणेनाम्बु ह्यानाय्य कलशेन तम्।।44।।
लङ्काराज्याधिपत्यार्थमभिषेकं रमापतिः। कारयामास सचिवैर्लक्ष्मणेन विशेषतः।।45।।

ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha śrīrāmo bhaktabhaktimān/
paśyatvidānīmevaiṣa mama sandarśane phalam//
laṅkārājye'bhiṣekṣyāmi jalamānaya sāgarāt/
yāvaccandraśca sūryaśca yāvattiṣṭhati medinī//
yāvanmama kathā loke tāvadrājyaṃ karotvasau/
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇenāmbu hyānāyya kalaśena tam//
laṅkārājyādhipatyārthamabhiṣekaṃ ramāpatiḥ/
kārayāmāsa sacivairlakṣmaṇena viśeṣataḥ//

Having said so to Vibhishan, Sri Ram told Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Have you seen (observed) the fruit/reward of having my Darshan? (42). Bring water from the ocean—I shall anoint him on the throne of Lanka. As long as the sun, the moon and the earth exist, and as long as my stories are narrated in this world, he shall rule over the kingdom of Lanka'.

Saying so, Ramapati (literally the husband of Laxmi; or Lord Vishnu personified as Sri Ram) had Laxman bring water in a pitcher and got him (Vibhishan) symbolically anointed on the throne of Lanka by his ministers, and specially by Laxman (who was acting on the behalf of Sri Ram and did the actual anointment himself) (43-45).

[Note :—Sri Ram did not perform the anointment ceremony himself but got it done through Laxman who was acting on his behalf. At the time of Surgiv's anointment in Kishkindha, Sri Ram had found an excuse that he cannot go to a city for the remaining of the fourteen year exile period. But there were no such constraints here at the ocean shore. He could have done the anointment himself. The plausible reasons for his avoiding it are—(i) Since only a king is empowered to anoint someone when he conquers another kingdom, Sri Ram could not do so for fourteen years of exile period when he was not a king. (ii) He wanted Laxman to have importance in the hierarchy so that his orders are given due weightage and importance during the forthcoming conflict. (iii) To tell Laxman subtly that the Lord gives him a lot of strategic importance besides love and affection. This was a crucial morale booster for Laxman who had sacrificed his comforts in Ayodhya to share the Lord's misfortunes in the forest. It was also to tell him in a silent manner that the Lord has not held him responsible for negligence for kidnapping of Sita by Ravana.]

साधु साध्विति ते सर्वे वानरास्तुष्टुवुर्भृशम्। सुग्रीवोऽपि परिष्वज्य विभीषणमथाब्रवीत्।।46।।

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विभीषण वयं सर्वे रामस्य परमात्मनः। किङ्करास्तत्र मुख्यस्त्वं भक्त्या रामपरिग्रहात्।
रावणस्य विनाशे त्वं साहाय्यं कर्तुमर्हसि।।47।।

sādhu sādhviti te sarve vānarāstuṣṭuvurbhṛśam /
sugrīvo'pi pariṣvajya vibhīṣaṇamathābravīt //
vibhīṣaṇa vayaṃ sarve rāmasya paramātmanaḥ /
kiṅkarāstatra mukhyastvaṃ bhaktyā rāmaparigrahāt /
rāvaṇasya vināśe tvaṃ sāhāyyaṃ kartumarhasi //

At that time, all the monkeys felt exhilarated and very elated at this noble gesture and outlook of Sri Ram, and exclaimed 'great, great indeed!' Sugriv embraced Vibhishan and said (46), 'Oh Vibhishan! All of us are servants (devotees, followers, subordinates) of Sri Ram who is Parmatma (supreme Soul) personified. Still, you are the chief amongst us because you have taken his shelter and refuge only due to your devotion for him (see verse nos. 31-32) (whereas I have sought his refuge due to my self vested interest). Now, you should help us to destroy (i.e. overcome and kill) Ravana' (47).

[Note :—Though both Sugriv and Vibhishan had taken shelter or sought protection from Sri Ram because both were tormented by their respective brothers, but there is a slight difference. Sugriv had never given Vaali a chance to see reason and surrender before Sri Ram. In fact, Sugriv wished to avenge Vaali because he had thrown him out of the kingdom and had kept his wife. On the other hand, Vibhishan had tried his best to make Ravana see reason and had tried to rationalise with him but was instead publicly rebuffed by Ravana. Further, Ravana had not mistreated Vibhishan earlier, and his reaction at the latter's advise is also understandable because Vibhishan was openly taking sides with Ravana's enemy and advising surrender which was absolutely not acceptable from the view of a king that Ravana was. That amounted to treason! After all, wars were fought for such non-sense reasons as the king wanting a particular woman throughout history. Ravana had always treated Vibhishan's wife Sarma with due respect behooving her status as his sister-in-law, even after his brother had left Lanka to take sides with Sri Ram, and this was not definitely not the reason for Vibhishan surrendering to Sri Ram. Though it is true that Sugriv had shown a lot of wisdom after Vaali was slayed and had wished to renounce the kingdom, but that was after he had squared up his account with his brother! When both Sugriv and Vibhishan are put on the scale, it tends to tilt more in favour of the latter than the former in this particular aspect, though both were betrayers of their respective brothers. But their reasons for such betrayal were different. Further, Vibhishan was a noble soul from the vary beginning

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and he had asked for 'wisdom and righteous thinking' as a boon from Brahma when he was pleased by the former's Tapa (see Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 18-19). Sugriv's life has no such episode. Hence, we conclude that Vibhishan was a better placed devotee of Sri Ram as compared to Sugriv. It is to Sugriv's credit that he has realised this fact and publicly proclaimed it.]

विभीषण उवाच

अहं कियान्सहायत्वे रामस्य परमात्मनः। किं तु दास्यं करिष्येऽहं भक्त्या शक्त्या ह्यमायया।। 48।।
दशग्रीवेण सन्दिष्टः शुको नाम महासुरः। संस्थितो ह्याम्बरे वाक्यं सुग्रीवमिदमब्रवीत्।। 49।।

vibhīṣaṇa uvāca

ahaṃ kiyānsahāyatve rāmasya paramātmanaḥ /
kiṃ tu dāsyaṃ kariṣye'haṃ bhaktyā śaktyā hyamāyayā //
daśagrīveṇa sandiṣṭaḥ śuko nāma mahāsuraḥ /
saṃsthito hyambare vākyaṃ sugrīvamidamabravīt //

Vibhishan replied, 'What and how can I be of any help to Sri Ram who is the supreme Soul (Parmatma, the Lord God himself). Still I shall do whatever service I can without any deception, malefic intentions, deceit, craft and imposturing of any kind' (48).

Right at that time, a great demon named Shuk, who was sent by Ravana as a spy, stood in the sky and said to Sugriv (49)—

त्वामाह रावणो राजा भ्रातरं राक्षसाधिपः। महाकुलप्रसूतस्त्वं राजासि वनचारिणाम्।। 50।।
मम भ्रातृसमानस्त्वं तव नास्त्यर्थविप्लवः। अहं यदहरं भार्यां राजपुत्रस्य किं तव।। 51।।

tvāmāha rāvaṇo rājā bhrātaraṃ rākṣasādhipaḥ /
mahākulaprasūtastvaṃ rājāsi vanacāriṇām //
mama bhrātṛsamānastvaṃ tava nāstyarthaviplavaḥ /
ahaṃ yadaharaṃ bhāryāṃ rājaputrasya kiṃ tava //

'The king of demons, Ravana, treats you like his own brother. He has sent you a message that 'You are born in a higher clan amongst the monkeys and are a king of monkeys. You are like my brother and none of your self-interest has been ever harmed or affected by me. I have stolen (kidnapped) the wife of a prince; how does that affect you? (50-51).

किष्किन्धां याहि हरिभिर्लङ्का शक्या न दैवतैः। प्राप्तं किं मानवैरल्पसत्त्वैर्वानरयूथपैः।। 52।।
तं प्रापयन्तं वचनं तूर्णमुत्प्लुत्य वानराः। प्रापद्यन्त तदा क्षिप्रं निहन्तुं दृढमुष्टिभिः।। 53।।

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kiṣkindhāṃ yāhi haribhirlaṅkā śakyā na daivataiḥ /
prāptuṃ kiṃ mānavairalpasattvairvānarayūthapaiḥ //
taṃ prāpayantaṃ vacanaṃ tūrṇamutplutya vānarāḥ /
prāpadyanta tadā kṣipraṃ nihantuṃ dṛḍhamuṣṭibhiḥ //

Therefore you should return to Kishkindha with your army of monkeys. It is even difficult for the Gods to get (victory over) Lanka, so what to talk of weak and ordinary humans with diminutive powers as well as the lowly commanders of monkey hordes' (52).

Even while Shuk was conveying the message (of Ravana), the monkeys jumped and caught him with the intention to thrash him with punches and kicks and kill him (53).

वानरैर्हन्यमानस्तु शुको राममथाब्रवीत्। न दूतान् घ्नन्ति राजेन्द्र वानरान्वारय प्रभो ।। 54 ।।
रामः श्रुत्वा तदा वाक्यं शुकस्य परिदेवितम्। मा वधिष्टेति रामस्तान्वारयामास वानरान् ।। 55 ।।
पुनरम्बरमासाद्य शुकः सुग्रीवमब्रवीत्। ब्रूहि राजन्दशग्रीवं किं वक्ष्यामि व्रजाम्यहम् ।। 56 ।।

vānarairhanyamānastu śuko rāmamathābravīt /
na dūtāṃ ghnanti rājendra vānarānvāraya prabho //
rāmaḥ śrutvā tadā vākyaṃ śukasya paridevitam /
mā vadhiṣṭeti rāmastāmvārayāmāsa vānarān //
punarambaramāsādya śukaḥ sugrīvamabravīt /
brūhi rājandaśagrīvaṃ kiṃ vakṣyāmi vrajāmyaham //

When the monkeys fiercely assaulted him, Shuk said to Sri Ram, 'Oh Rajendra (King of kings)! A messenger should not be hurt or killed. So oh Lord, stop these monkeys' (54).

Hearing this plea for mercy, Sri Ram stopped the monkeys from thrashing him by commanding them not to hurt him (55).

Shuk climbed up the sky once again and said from there, 'Oh king (Sugriv)! I am going. Tell me, what should I tell Ravana on your behalf (or what message do you have for him in reply)?' (56).

सुग्रीव उवाच

यथा वाली मम भ्राता तथा त्वं राक्षसाधम। हन्तव्यस्त्वं मया यत्नात्सपुत्रबलवाहनः ।। 57 ।।
ब्रूहि मे रामचन्द्रस्य भार्यां हृत्वा क्व यास्यसि। ततो रामाज्ञया धृत्वा शुकं बध्वान्वरक्षयत् ।। 58 ।।

sugrīva uvāca

yathā vālī mama bhrātā tathā tvaṃ rākṣasādhama /
hantavyastvaṃ mayā yatnātsaputrabalavāhanaḥ //

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brūhi me rāmacandrasya bhāryāṃ hṛtvā kva yāsyasi /
tato rāmājñayā dhṛtvā śukaṃ badhvānvarakṣayat //

Sugriv said, 'Tell him that the way I had killed my brother Vaali, oh the wretched demon (Ravana), you too will be killed at my hands along with your sons and army, and your war paraphernalia such as vehicles etc. would be destroyed by me (57). Where can you go (escape) now after having stolen the wife of Sri Ram Chandra?' After that he caught hold of Shuk again, but on the instructions of Sri Ram he tied him in shackles and put him in the custody of monkeys (58).

शार्दूलोऽपि ततः पूर्वं दृष्ट्वा कपिबलं महत्। यथावत्कथयामास रावणाय स राक्षसः।। 59।।
दीर्घचिन्तापरो भूत्वा निःश्वसन्नास मन्दिरे। ततः समुद्रमावेक्ष्य रामो रक्तान्तलोचनः।। 60।।

śārdūlo'pi tataḥ pūrvaṃ dṛṣṭvā kapibalaṃ mahat /
yathāvatkathayāmāsa rāvaṇāya sa rākṣasaḥ //
dīrghacintāparo bhūtvā niḥśvasannāsa mandire /
tataḥ samudramāvekṣya rāmo raktāntalocanaḥ //

Prior to Shuk, another demon called Shardul (who had come at the instance of Ravana but stayed hidden all along) had seen the great army of monkeys and described about it to Ravana (when he went back to Lanka) (59).

Hearing all this, Ravana was extremely worried, and he sat in his palace breathing heavily. Here, Sri Ram looked (i.e. glared) at the ocean with eyes red with indignation, exasperation and anger and said (60)—

पश्य लक्ष्मण दुष्टोऽसौ वारिधिर्मामुपागतम्। नाभिनन्दति दुष्टात्मा दर्शनार्थं ममानघ।। 61।।
जानाति मानुषोऽयं मे किं करिष्यति वानरैः। अद्य पश्य महाबाहो शोषयिष्यामि वारिधिम्।।62।।

paśya lakṣmaṇa duṣṭo'sau vāridhirmāmupāgatam /
nābhinandati duṣṭātmā darśanārthaṃ mamānagha //
jānāti mānuṣo'yaṃ me kiṃ kariṣyati vānaraiḥ /
adya paśya mahābāho śoṣayiṣyāmi vāridhim //

'Oh Laxman! How wicked is this Ocean! I have come to its shore, but oh Anagh (the sinless, pure and faultless one), this wicked soul has not even wished me (i.e. have not welcomed me and has not shown his respect to me as his guest) even after seeing me. [That is, he is very haughty, arrogant, un-courteous and un-civilised.] (61). It thinks 'after all, he is an ordinary human being; what can he harm me though he has joined forces with the monkeys who reside on my northern banks?' So, oh the brave one, look! Today I shall dry this Ocean up (62).

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पादेनैव गमिष्यन्ति वानरा विगतज्वराः। इत्युक्त्वा क्रोधताम्राक्ष आरोपितधनुर्धरः।। 63।।
तूणीराद्बाणमादाय कालाग्निसदृशप्रभम्। सन्धाय चापमाकृष्य रामो वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्।।64।।

pādenaiva gamiṣyanti vānarā vigatajvarāḥ /
ityuktvā krodhatāmrākṣa āropitadhanurdharaḥ //
tūṇīrādbāṇamādāya kālāgnisadṛśaprabham /
sandhāya cāpamākṛṣya rāmo vākyamathābravīt //

Then the monkeys can cross it on foot'. Saying this, he (Sri Ram) lifted and stringed his formidable bow (63), took out an arrow which was as potent and fierce as the fire of doomsday from his quiver, mounted it on the bow, pulled it and said (64)—

पश्यन्तु सर्वभूतानि रामस्य शरविक्रमम्। इदानीं भस्मसात्कुर्यां समुद्रं सरितां पतिम्।। 65।।
एवं ब्रुवति रामे तु सशैलवनकानना। चचाल वसुधा द्यौश्च दिशश्च तमसावृताः।। 66।।
चुक्षुभे सागरो वेलां भयाद्योजनमत्यगात्। तिमिनक्रझषा मीनाः प्रतप्ताः परितत्रसुः।। 67।।

paśyantu sarvabhūtāni rāmasya śaravikramam /
idānīṃ bhasmasātkuryāṃ samudraṃ saritāṃ patim //
evaṃ brūvati rāme tu saśailavanakānanā /
cacāla vasudhā dyauśca diśaśca tamasāvṛtāḥ //
cukṣubhe sāgaro velāṃ bhayādyojanamatyagāt /
timinakrajhaṣā mīnāḥ prataptāḥ paritatrasuḥ //

'Let all the creatures see the might, prowess and potential of Sri Ram's arrow. I will immediately reduce to ashes (i.e. dry up) this king of rivers, the mighty Ocean' (65).

As soon as Sri Ram threatened thus, the whole earth shook along with its mountains and forests, while darkness covered all the directions as well as the sky (66).

The Ocean felt sorry and was full of regret, and it moved one Yojan (roughly 8 miles) ahead on its shores. Larger fish (e.g. whales, sharks), whirlpools, crocodiles/alligators and smaller fish became extremely terrified and felt very harried, perturbed and agitated (67).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे साक्षात्सागरो दिव्यरूपधृक्। दिव्याभरणसम्पन्नः स्वभासा भासयन् दिशः।।68।।
स्वान्तःस्थदिव्यरत्नानि कराभ्यां परिगृह्य सः। पादयोः पुरतः क्षिप्त्वा रामस्योपायनं बहु।।69।।
दण्डवत्प्रणिपत्याह रामं रक्तान्तलोचनम्। त्राहि त्राहि जगन्नाथ राम त्रैलोक्यरक्षक।। 70।।

etasminnantare sākṣātsāgaro divyarūpadhṛk /
divyābharaṇasampannaḥ svabhāsā bhāsayan diśaḥ //

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svāntaḥsthadivyaratnāni karābhyāṃ parigṛhya saḥ /
pādayoḥ purataḥ kṣiptvā rāmasyopāyanaṃ bahu //
daṇḍavatpraṇipatyāha rāmaṃ raktāntalocanam /
trāhi trāhi jagannātha rāma trailokyarakṣaka //

Just about that moment, the Ocean appeared himself personally before Sri Ram. He had a divine form, was adorned by magnificent ornaments and carried in his hands beautiful gems and jewels present inside it (e.g. pearls, corals, shells etc.) as gifts for Sri Ram. He was illuminating all the directions by his self-radiant glow. He kept the various gems and jewels that he had brought as gifts at the feet of Sri Ram (68-69).

Then he fell down like a stick at the feet of Sri Ram whose eyes were extremely red with anger, exasperation and indignation. After that he said, 'Oh Sri Ram, the protector of the three worlds and the Lord of the world/universe. Save me, protect me, have mercy on me! (70).

जडोऽहं राम ते सृष्टः सृजता निखिलं जगत्। स्वभावमन्यथा कर्तुं कः शक्तो देवनिर्मितम्।। 71।।
स्थूलानि पञ्चभूतानि जडान्येव स्वभावतः। सृष्टानि भवतैतानि त्वदाज्ञां लङ्घयन्ति न।।72।।

jaḍo'haṃ rāma te sṛṣṭaḥ sṛjatā nikhilaṃ jagat /
svabhāvamanyathā kartuṃ kaḥ śakto devanirmitam //
sthūlāni pañcabhūtāni jaḍānyeva svabhāvataḥ /
sṛṣṭāni bhavataitāni tvadājñāṃ laṅghayanti na //

'Oh Sri Ram! At the time of creation of the world/universe, you had made me lowly, an ignorant dumb and a foolish blockhead—say, how can anyone change the natural temperament, inherent tendency and inclination created by you? (71). All the five basic elements that you had created (at the time of creation) are all gross and inert by nature—they cannot (have the temerity and audacity to) violate or supersede you orders (72).

[Note :—The five gross elements from which the whole creation has materialized are—earth or soil, water, fire or energy, air or wind, and space or sky. These are the basic ingredients for the whole creation.]

तामसादहमो राम भूतानि प्रभवन्ति हि। कारणानुगमात्तेषां जडत्वं तामसं स्वतः।। 73।।
निर्गुणस्त्वं निराकारो यदा मायागुणान्प्रभो। लीलयाङ्गीकरोषि त्वं तदा वैराजनामवान्।।74।।
गुणात्मनो विराजश्च सत्त्वाद्देवा बभूविरे। रजोगुणात्प्रजेशाद्या मन्योर्भूतपतिस्तव।।75।।

tāmasādahamo rāma bhūtāni prabhavanti hi /
kāraṇānugamātteṣāṃ jaḍatvaṃ tāmasaṃ svataḥ //

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nirguṇastvaṃ nirākāro yadā māyāguṇānprabho /
līlayāṅgīkaroṣi tvaṃ tadā vairājanāmavān //
guṇātmano virājaśca sattvāddevā babhūvire /
rajoguṇātprajeśādyā manyorbhūtapatistava //

Oh Sri Ram! The five elements called 'Bhuts' originate from 'Tamas Ahankar' (i.e. the negative form of ego and pride which makes a creature falsely arrogant and haughty and inculcates an illusive sense of importance and majesty in him, making him a hypocrite and pervert). Hence, since their origin is not pure and noble, they will lend their parent qualities to the creation which results from them, obviously making the latter exhibit those negative qualities. [Since the ingredients or inputs are gross and based on negative tendencies, how can the end product be wise, noble and righteous?] This is a self evident fact (73).

Oh Lord! You are 'Nirgun' (have no attributes, no defining qualities and no honours) as well as 'Nirakar' (have no forms, no names and no shapes). When you playfully (i.e. willingly, sportingly, just for the sake of it) accept the qualities or characteristics of Maya (your powers to create illusions, delusions and their accompanying hallucinations), you are called 'Vairaj'[1] (74).

Out of the different aspects of that Vairaj, various Gods and demigods are created—such as for example, (a) the senior Gods, called Devas, are created out of the Satvic aspects (i.e. the virtuous, positive, noble, holy and divine qualities which are regarded foremost and first amongst the different virtues that determine the nature of a creature), (b) the guardians of the creation, called Prajapatis, are created out of the Rajsic aspects (the quality which produces the tendency to sustain, expand, acquire, enjoy worldly desires, have passions, selfishness etc. which inspires and impels the creature towards this world and keeps it entangled in its activities), and (c) the different Rudras (literally that form of demigod who represents various discords and quarrels, conflicts and ill wills, malice and inimical tendencies which create anger, wrath and vengeance in a creature) are created out of the Tamas aspects (the basest quality producing anger, wrath, vengeance, malice, animosity, ill-will, jealousy, quarrels etc.) (75).

[Note—[1]The word 'Vairaj' has two connotations—(a) the supreme God or creator, and (b) the rule of two kings in the same country. Here both the meanings are applicable. Though the Supreme Being is formless,

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nameless and attributeless, is basically immutably one and an indivisible whole, i.e. he is Nirgun and Nirakar, he has been assigned certain names and attributes depending upon the work he does, such as for example Brahma when he creates, as Vishnu when he sustains, as Shiva when he annihilates, as Indra when he rules over the kingdom on his own creation, as the different Gods representing so many virtues and qualities in the creation, as Nature in whose bowl this creation has been conceived and manifested, as the individual creature that would inhabit the creation as its unit, as the uncountable number of these creatures, each displaying its unique characteristics and nature, as things visible and non-visible, and so on and so forth. The same supreme Lord appears as the vast 'Nature' in all its prime glories at the macro level, and as the 'nature' of an individual creature, determining its temperament, inclination and tendencies, at the micro level. In short, the immutable and indivisible Lord appears to be in two forms—the visible and gross as well as the invisible and subtle. Further, the same form has also been assigned different names—viz. Lord Vishnu has numerous names, such as Viraat Purush, Hari, Parmatma etc., but that should not distract a wise person from the basic fact of the immutability and oneness of the supreme transcendental Brahm.]

त्वामहं मायया छन्नं लीलया मानुषाकृतिम्।। 76।।
जडबुद्धिर्जडो मूर्खः कथं जानामि निर्गुणम्। दण्ड एव हि मूर्खाणां सन्मार्गप्रापकः प्रभो।।77।।
भूतानाममरश्रेष्ठ पशूनां लगुडो यथा। शरणं ते व्रजामीशं शरण्यं भक्तवत्सल।
अभयं देहि मे राम लङ्कामार्गं ददामि ते।।78।।

tvāmahaṃ māyayā channaṃ līlayā mānuṣākṛtim//
jaḍabuddhirjaḍo mūrkhaḥ kathaṃ jānāmi nirguṇam/
daṇḍa eva hi mūrkhāṇāṃ sanmārgaprāpakaḥ prabho//
bhūtānāmamaraśreṣṭha paśūnāṃ laguḍo yathā/
śaraṇaṃ te vrajāmīśaṃ śaraṇyaṃ bhaktavatsala/
abhayaṃ dehi me rāma laṅkāmārgaṃ dadāmi te//

You have assumed a human form by willingly and almost playfully letting yourself be surrounded (or being influenced, affected, infused) by your own illusive Maya (deluding powers leading to ignorance, illusions, hallucinations and deceptions, and which hides the reality) (76).

How can I who am ignorant, foolish, block-headed and ill-witted ever realise or comprehend or understand the true nature, true potent, true vastness and true majesty of your Nirgun form (which is formless, nameless and without any definitions, any qualities and any

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attributes)[1]. Oh Lord who is eternal and immortal as well as the Supreme Being in creation! Such ignorant and dumb-headed people like me (i.e. those who are idiotic, foolish and of a low intellect) can be made to follow the path of righteousness, propriety, probity and noble conduct only by using the stick (literally, by the fear of punishment or by coercion) (77) even as an animal has to be guided and prodded along its path with a stick. Oh Lord who is most benevolent, merciful, magnanimous, gracious and kind towards his devotees and followers! I take refuge and seek shelter in your holy, august and divine feet. Oh Sri Ram! You protect and are compassionate towards your devotees who have taken your shelter and sought your refuge. Bless me with fearlessness. I shall give you the right of passage to Lanka' (78).

[Note—[1]That is, how can I, who am of such a low intellect, ever fathom the vastness of the one who is the object of profound and deep meditation, who is so miniscule that he is invisible to the naked eye like the atom or the molecule of the elements, but at the same time is so vast and myriad as the spectacular variety of the colourful and vibrant universe, which in essence consists of the atoms and molecules having their origin in you].

श्रीराम उवाच

अमोघोऽयं महाबाणः कस्मिन्देशे निपात्यताम्। लक्ष्यं दर्शय मे शीघ्रं बाणस्यामोघपातिनः।।79।।
रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा करे दृष्ट्वा महाशरम्। महोदधिर्महातेजा राघवं वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 80।।

śrīrāma uvāca

amogho'yaṃ mahābāṇaḥ kasmindeśe nipātyatām/
lakṣyaṃ darśaya me śīghraṃ bāṇasyāmoghapātinaḥ//
rāmasya vacanaṃ śrutvā kare dṛṣṭvā mahāśaram/
mahodadhirmahātejā rāghavaṃ vākyamabravīt//

Sri Ram said referring to his raised arrow, 'This great arrow of mine cannot go in vain. Hence, in which direction should I shoot it? Show me quickly the target for this arrow' (79).

Hearing these stern and urgent words of Sri Ram, and seeing that formidable and potent arrow in his hand ready to be shot, the great and radiant Ocean pleaded with Raghav (Sri Ram) (80)—

रामोत्तरप्रदेशे तु द्रुमकुल्य इति श्रुतः। प्रदेशस्तत्र बहवः पापात्मानो दिवानिशम्।। 81।।
बाधन्ते मां रघुश्रेष्ठ तत्र ते पात्यतां शरः। रामेण सृष्टो बाणस्तु क्षणादाभीरमण्डलम्।।82।।
हत्वा पुनः समागत्य तूणीरे पूर्ववत्स्थितः। ततोऽब्रवीद्रघुश्रेष्ठं सागरो विनयान्वितः।। 83।।

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rāmottarapradeśe tu drumakulya iti śrutaḥ /
pradeśastatra bahavaḥ pāpātmāno divāniśam //
bādhante māṃ raghuśreṣṭha tatra te pātyatāṃ śaraḥ /
rāmeṇa sṛṣṭo bāṇastu kṣaṇādābhīramaṇḍalam //
hatvā punaḥ samāgatya tūṇīre pūrvavatsthitaḥ /
tato'bravīdraghuśreṣṭhaṃ sāgaro vinayānvitaḥ //

'Oh Sri Ram! There is a country called Drumkulya north of here. Many sinners and evil mongers reside there. Night and day (81), they torment and harass me. Oh the most exalted in king Raghu's clan (Sri Ram)! Let you arrow fall there, or be shot there (so that I would be freed from their torments for good)'.

Thence, that arrow shot by Sri Ram annihilated the whole of the district inhabited by 'Abhirs' (cow-keepers, milkmen, cowherd community) and returned back to his quiver. Thereafter, the ocean said to the best among the Raghus (Sri Ram) most politely (82-83)—

नलः सेतुं करोत्वस्मिन् जले मे विश्वकर्मणः।
सुतो धीमान् समर्थोऽस्मिन्कार्ये लब्धवरो हरिः।।84।।
कीर्तिं जानन्तु ते लोकाः सर्वलोकमलापहाम्। इत्युक्त्वा राघवं नत्वा ययौ सिन्धुरदृश्यताम्।।85।।

nalaḥ setuṃ karotvasmin jale me viśvakarmaṇaḥ /
suto dhīmān samartho'sminkārye labdhavaro hariḥ //
kīrtiṃ jānantu te lokāḥ sarvalokamalāpahām /
ityuktvā rāghavaṃ natvā yayau sindhuradṛśyatām //

'Let Nal, the son of Vishwakarma, construct a bridge over the water. This clever and expert monkey is able to do it because of a special boon that he possesses (84). By doing so (i.e. erecting the bridge), all the people of the world would become aware of your fame and glory as the one who can eliminate the most formidable of oppositions and obstacles of this world'. Saying this to Raghav (Sri Ram), the ocean vanished from sight (85).

ततो रामस्तु सुग्रीवलक्ष्मणाभ्यां समन्वितः। नलमाज्ञापयच्छीघ्रं वानरैः सेतुबन्धने।। 86।।
ततोऽतिहृष्टः प्लवगेन्द्रयूथपैर्महानगेन्द्रप्रतिमैर्युतो नलः।
बबन्ध सेतुं शतयोजनायतं सुविस्तृतं पर्वतपादपैर्दृढम्।।87।।

tato rāmastu sugrīvalakṣmaṇābhyāṃ samanvitaḥ /
nalamājñāpayacchīghraṃ vānarai setubandhane //

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tato'tihṛṣṭaḥ plavagendrayūthapairmahānagendrapratimairyuto nalaḥ /
babandhaṃ setuṃ śatayojanāyataṃ suvistṛtaṃ parvatapādapairdṛḍham //

Thereafter, Nal was ordered by Sri Ram, Sugriv and Laxman to tie the bridge with the help of other monkeys (86).

Then Nal, with the help of commanders and chieftains of the various monkey hordes, who were as colossus as mountains themselves, built a bridge most cheerfully using huge mountains and large trees. The bridge was very strong and sturdy, and it extended for one hundred Yojans (800 miles from the shore of India to Sri Lanka) (87).

[Note (1) The next canto 4, verse no.5-7 describes that the bridge was built in five days. In another Puran called the 'Devi Puran—Mahabhagwat' by the author of this Ramayan, sage Veda Vyas, the construction was started on the full moon day of the Hindu month of Shrawan (roughly July-August). This Puran is amongst the numerous Maha Purans and Up-purans penned by Veda Vyas. It was originally narrated by Lord Shiva to sage Narad in the heavens, then by sage Suk to many sages who had gathered to hear the scriptures from him in the holy site of Naimisharanya. One amongst them was sage Shaunak. Suk told them that it was sage Veda Vyas who had first penned it as one of his numerous Purans, and it is said that it is the 5th Puran. Veda Vyas had narrated it to sage Jaimini himself. It has the whole story of Ramayan in its chapter no. 36 to 48. Chapter 40, verse no.5-7 describes the construction of the bridge across the ocean, and the specific date is mentioned in verse no.6 of the text. I am quoting those verses here—"Sri Ram created such a situation that the fierce and uncompromising ocean submitted itself to his wishes (i.e. he buckled against the might of Sri Ram and refrained from creating any hindrance in his endeavours, rather he became cooperative) and willingly accepted to be tied (bridged). Thereafter, on the instructions of Sugriv, huge mountains were uprooted and dumped in the ocean (5) by Nal, the son of Maye. Thus was created (constructed) the bridge. Oh the lion amongst sage (i.e. Narad)! The construction was started on the full moon day of the month of Shrawan (roughly July-August) (6)".

The logs of wood from trees were used because they would keep the stone slabs afloat on the water, and the planks were tied together using creepers found on mountains and trees. The existence of this bridge has been established by satellite images taken by the Indian satellite IRS-1A which in 1962 had taken photographs of the remnants of a stone bridge. It appeared to streak from Dhanushkoti in India to Talai Manner in Sri Lanka. This was corroborated by U.S. astronauts aboard Gemini XI satellite launched on 14/9/1966.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 4

Crossing of the ocean by Sri Ram; Inspection of Lanka; Conversation between Ravana and Shuk

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

सेतुमारभमाणस्तु तत्र रामेश्वरं शिवम्। संस्थाप्य पूजयित्वाह रामो लोकहिताय च।। 1।।
प्रणमेत्सेतुबन्धं यो दृष्ट्वा रामेश्वरं शिवम्। ब्रह्महत्यादिपापेभ्यो मुच्यते मदनुग्रहात्।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

setumārabhamāṇastu tatra rāmeśvaraṃ śivam /
saṃsthāpya pūjayitvāha rāmo lokahitāya ca //
praṇametsetuvandhaṃ yo dṛṣṭvā rāmeśvaraṃ śivam /
brahmahatyādipāpebhyo mucyate madanugrahāt //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! At the time of beginning of the construction of the bridge, Sri Ram installed the Lingam of Rameshwar Shiva (literally, Shiva who is the Lord of Sri Ram, or conversely, Sri Ram who is the Lord of Shiva), worshipped him and said the following words for the welfare of the world (1), 'Those persons who would have Darshan of (i.e. reverentially see and pay homage to) Rameshwar Shiva and bow reverentially with devotion before the bridge (which I have built), shall be freed from horrible sins such as the killing of a Brahmin etc. (2).

सेतुबन्धे नरः स्नात्वा दृष्ट्वा रामेश्वरं हरम्। सङ्कल्पनियतो भूत्वा गत्वा वाराणसीं नरः।। 3।।
आनीय गङ्गासलिलं रामेशमभिषिच्य च। समुद्रे क्षिप्ततद्भारो ब्रह्म प्राप्नोत्यसंशयम्।।4।।

setubandhe naraḥ snātvā dṛṣṭvā rāmeśvaraṃ haram /
saṅkalpaniyato bhūtvā gatvā vārāṇasīṃ naraḥ //
ānīya gaṅgāsalilaṃ rāmeśamabhiṣicya ca /
samudre kṣiptatadbhāro brahma prāpnotyasaṃśayam //

Any person who first bathes in the ocean near the bridge, has a Darshan (divine and august viewing) of Rameshwar Har (Shiva), goes to Kashi (Varanasi) determined to bring the water of the river Ganges from there to this place, pours that holy water over the Rameshwaram Lingam and then puts the container (in which the water was brought) in the ocean—such a person shall attain Brahm (the supreme transcendental Lord) without doubt (3-4).

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[Note :—Verse nos. 1-4 highlight the importance of Rameshwaram and the pilgrimage to it.]

कृतानि प्रथमेनाह्ना योजनानि चतुर्दश। द्वितीयेन तथा चाह्ना योजनानि तु विंशतिः।। 5।।
तृतीयेन तथा चाह्ना योजनान्येकविंशतिः। चतुर्थेन तथा चाह्ना द्वाविंशतिरिति श्रुतम्।। 6।।
पञ्चमेन त्रयोविंशद्योजनानि समन्ततः। बबन्ध सागरे सेतुं नलो वानरसत्तमः।। 7।।

kṛtāni prathamenāhnā yojanāni caturdaśa /
dvitīyena tathā cāhnā yojanāni tu viṃśatiḥ //
tṛtīyena tathā cāhnā yojanānyekaviṃśatiḥ /
caturthena tathā cāhnā dvāviṃśatiriti śrutam //
pañcamena trayoviṃśadyojanāni samantataḥ /
babandha sāgare setuṃ nalo vānarasattamaḥ //

It is heard that on the first day the bridge was tied for a distance of fourteen Yojans, on the second day for twenty Yojans (5), on the third day twenty one Yojans, on the fourth day twenty two Yojans (6), and on the fifth day for twenty three Yojans. Thus, the bridge was completely tied (and made walkable) over the ocean by Nal who was the best (in his field of expertise) amongst the monkeys (7).

[Note :—We see that the bridge was completed in a record five days as follows—14+20+21+22+23 = 100 Yojans.]

तेनैव जग्मुः कपयो योजनानां शतं द्रुतम्। असङ्ख्याताः सुवेलाद्रिं रुरुधुः प्लवगोत्तमाः।। 8।।
आरुह्य मारुतिं रामो लक्ष्मणोऽप्यङ्गदं तथा। दिदृक्षू राघवो लङ्कामारुरोहाचलं महत्।। 9।।

tenaiva jagmuḥ kapayo yojanānāṃ śataṃ drutam /
asaṅkhyātāḥ suvelādriṃ rurudhuḥ plavagottamāḥ //
āruhya mārutīṃ rāmo lakṣmaṇo'pyaṅgadaṃ tathā /
didṛkṣū rāghavo laṅkāmārurohācalaṃ mahat //

The monkeys crossed the hundred Yojan-wide ocean on that bridge almost immediately. Then numerous monkey warriors besieged the mountain called Subel (8).

Then Sri Ram strode on the shoulders of Hanuman and Laxman on Angad, and they climbed on the top of that huge mountain because Sri Ram had wished to have a panoramic view of Lanka and survey the landscape (9).

दृष्ट्वा लङ्कां सुविस्तीर्णां नानाचित्रध्वजाकुलाम्। चित्रप्रासादसम्बाधां स्वर्णप्राकारतोरणाम्।। 10।।
परिखाभिः शतघ्नीभिः सङ्क्रमैश्च विराजिताम्। प्रासादोपरि विस्तीर्णप्रदेशे दशकन्धरः।। 11।।
मन्त्रिभिः सहितो वीरैः किरीटदशकोज्ज्वलः। नीलाद्रिशिखराकारः कालमेघसमप्रभः।। 12।।

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dṛṣṭvā laṅkāṃ suvistīrṇāṃ nānācitradhvajākulām /
citraprāsādasambādhāṃ svarṇaprākāratoraṇām //
parikhābhiḥ śataghnibhiḥ saṅkramaiśca virājitām /
prāsādopari vistīrṇapradeśe daśakandharaḥ //
mantribhiḥ sahito vīraiḥ kirīṭadaśakojjvalaḥ /
nīlādriśikharākāraḥ kālameghasamaprabhaḥ //

They saw that the city of Lanka was spread over a large area. It was decorated with different types of colourful flags and standards as well as buntings and festoons, had majestic buildings and palaces as well as golden ramparts (10). It was provided with moats, cannons and tunnels on all the sides. On one of its royal palaces, which was very large, sat Ravana (11), along with his brave ministers? Ten crowns adorned his heads. He was of the size of the summit of Mt. Neelachal, and his countenance resembled dark clouds (literally, the cloud of doomsday) (12).

रत्नदण्डैः सितच्छत्रैरनेकैः परिशोभितः। एतस्मिन्नन्तरे बद्धो मुक्तो रामेण वै शुकः।। 13।।
वानरैस्ताडितः सम्यग् दशाननमुपागतः। प्रहसन् रावणः प्राह पीडितः किं परैः शुक।। 14।।

ratnadaṇḍaiḥ sitacchatrairanekaiḥ pariśobhitaḥ /
etasminnantare baddho mukto rāmeṇa vai śukaḥ //
vānaraistāḍitaḥ samyag daśānanamupāgataḥ /
prahasan rāvaṇaḥ prāha pīḍitaḥ kiṃ paraiḥ śuka //

He looked stupendously magnificent with various types of white ceremonial royal umbrellas, having rods studded with gems, over his head. Just about that time, the demon Shuk—who had been earlier captured, tied and then released by Sri Ram (13), and was assaulted by the monkeys before his final release from captivity—reached Ravana, the 10-headed one. Seeing him, Ravana asked, 'Oh Shuk! Did the enemy torment you in any way?' (14).

रावणस्य वचः श्रुत्वा शुको वचनमब्रवीत्। सागरस्योत्तरे तीरेऽब्रवं ते वचनं यथा।
तत उत्प्लुत्य कपयो गृहीत्वा मां क्षणात्ततः।। 15।।
मुष्टिभिर्नखदन्तैश्च हन्तुं लोप्तुं प्रचक्रमुः। ततो मां राम रक्षेति क्रोशन्तं रघुपुङ्गवः।। 16।।
विसृज्यतामिति प्राह विसृष्टोऽहं कपीश्वरैः। ततोऽहमागतो भीत्या दृष्ट्वा तद्वानरं बलम्।। 17।।

rāvaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā śuko vacanamabravīt /
sāgarasyottare tīre'bravaṃ te vacanaṃ yathā /
tata utplutya kapayo gṛhītvā māṃ kṣaṇāttataḥ //

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muṣṭibhirnakhadantaiśca hantuṃ loptuṃ pracakramuḥ /
tato māṃ rāma rakṣeti krośantaṃ raghupuṅgavaḥ //
visṛjyatāmiti prāha visṛṣṭo'haṃ kapīśvaraiḥ /
tato'hamāgato bhītyā dṛṣṭvā tadvānaraṃ balam //

Hearing the words of Ravana, Shuk replied, 'When I went to the northern shore of the ocean and started to tell them (the monkeys) your message, no sooner did I begin than the monkeys jumped up and caught me (15). They started beating me with fists, scratching and lacerating me with their sharp nails and pointed teeth, and were planning to hide me somewhere (for torturing and killing me later on). Then I cried aloud, 'Oh Sri Ram! Protect me'. When the most exalted in the clan of Raghu (Sri Ram) (16) heard my pleas, he ordered— 'Leave him alone'. Then those monkeys let me off. I have seen the army of monkeys and have timidly avoided them to somehow escape from their clutches and come here (17).

राक्षसानां बलौघस्य वानरेन्द्रबलस्य च। नैतयोर्विद्यते सन्धिर्देवदानवयोरिव।। 18।।
पुरप्राकारमायान्ति क्षिप्रमेकतरं कुरु। सीतां वास्मै प्रयच्छाशु युद्धं वा दीयतां प्रभो।। 19।।

rākṣasānāṃ balaughasya vānarendrabalasya ca /
naitayorvidyate sandhirdevadānavayoriva //
puraprākāramāyānti kṣipramekataraṃ kuru /
sītāṃ vāsmai prayacchāśu yuddhaṃ vā dīyatāṃ prabho //

In my opinion, just like there is no comparison between the Gods and the Demons, there is also no functional equality, comparison, similarity, equivalence and balancing factor between the forces of the demons and the army of the monkeys (18).

Oh Lord! Very soon they shall be coming over to the periphery of the city and on the ramparts of the fort of Lanka. You will have to decide quickly upon one of the two options—either return Sita to them or make war with them (19).

मामाह रामस्त्वं ब्रूहि रावणं मद्वचः शुक। यद्बलं च समाश्रित्य सीतां मे ह्रृतवानसि।। 20।।
तद्दर्शय यथाकामं ससैन्यः सहबान्धवः। श्वःकाले नगरीं लङ्कां सप्राकारां सतोरणाम्।।21।।
राक्षसं च बलं पश्य शरैर्विध्वंसितं मया। घोररोषमहं मोक्ष्ये बलं धारय रावण।। 22।।

māmāha rāmastvaṃ brūhi rāvaṇaṃ madvacaḥ śuka /
yadbalaṃ ca samāśritya sītāṃ me hṛtavānasi //
taddarśaya yathākāmaṃ sasainyaḥ sahabāndhavaḥ /
śvaḥkāle nagarīṃ laṅkāṃ saprākārāṃ satoraṇām //

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rākṣasaṃ ca balaṃ paśya śarairvidhvaṃsitaṃ mayā /
ghoraroṣamahaṃ mokṣye balaṃ dhāraya rāvaṇa //

Sri Ram said to me, 'Oh Shuk! Tell Ravana on my behalf that the strength and courage, relying upon which he has stolen my Sita (20), let him show them to me properly, in all their shining potentials, along with his army and his kith and kin of whom he is so proud. Tomorrow you shall see the city of Lanka, together with its ramparts, flags, banners and festoons (21), as well as the demon army being demolished, trounced and destroyed, by my arrows. At that time, I shall breathe fire and brimstone. I challenge you to keep your strength and courage steady (in the face of my onslaught)! [Don't panic and run away from the battlefield like a jackal or a terrified dog.]' (22).

इत्युक्त्वोपररामाथ रामः कमललोचनः। एकस्थानगता यत्र चत्वारः पुरुषर्षभाः।। 23।।
श्रीरामो लक्ष्मणश्चैव सुग्रीवश्च विभीषणः। एत एव समर्थास्ते लङ्कां नाशयितुं प्रभो।।24।।

ityuktvopararāmātha rāmaḥ kamalalocanaḥ /
ekasthānagatā yatra catvāraḥ puruṣarṣabhāḥ //
śrīrāmo lakṣmaṇaścaiva sugrīvaśca vibhīṣaṇaḥ /
eta eva samarthāste laṅkāṃ nāśayituṃ prabho //

Saying so, the lotus-eyed Sri Ram became silent. Even if the whole of the monkey army remains indifferent and aloof (literally stands by the side, without fighting), the four most manly gentlemen (23), i.e. Sri Ram, Laxman, Sugriv and Vibhishan, are potent enough to demolish Lanka alone themselves, oh Lord! (24).

उत्पाट्य भस्मीकरणे सर्वे तिष्ठन्तु वानराः। तस्य यादृग् बलं दृष्टं रूपं प्रहरणानि च।। 25।।
बधिष्यति पुरं सर्वमेकस्तिष्ठन्तु ते त्रयः। पश्य वानरसेनां तामसङ्ख्यातां प्रपूरिताम्।। 26।।

utpāṭya bhasmīkaraṇe sarve tiṣṭhantu vānarāḥ /
tasya yādṛg balaṃ dṛṣṭaṃ rūpaṃ praharaṇāni ca //
vadhiṣyati puraṃ sarvamekastiṣṭhantu te trayaḥ /
paśya vānarasenāṃ tāmasaṅkhyātāṃ prapūritām //

The monkeys can uproot and completely reduce it (Lanka) to ashes. [That is, they can first pound it to rubble and then grind it underfoot to make a fine powder of its rubble]. Looking at the strength, aggressive posturings, expressions, demeanors, arms and armaments, it is evident that even if the other three (Laxman, Sugriv, Vibhishan) stand aside, Sri Ram alone can smash and destroy the whole city all by himself.

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Now have a look at the uncountable army of monkeys spread in all the directions (as far as the eyes can see) (25-26).

गर्जन्ति वानरास्तत्र पश्य पर्वतसन्निभाः। न शक्यास्ते गणयितुं प्राधान्येन ब्रवीमि ते।। 27।।
एष योऽभिमुखो लङ्कां नदंस्तिष्ठति वानरः। यूथपानां सहस्राणां शतेन परिवारितः।।28।।
सुग्रीवसेनाधिपतिर्नीलो नामाग्निनन्दनः। एष पर्वतशृङ्गाभः पद्मकिञ्जल्कसन्निभः।। 29।।
स्फोटयत्यभिसंरब्धो लाङ्गूलं च पुनः पुनः। युवराजोऽङ्गदो नाम वालिपुत्रोऽतिवीर्यवान्।। 30।।

garjanti vānarāstatra paśya parvatasannibhāḥ /
na śakyāste gaṇayituṃ prādhānyena bravīmi te //
eṣa yo'bhimukho laṅkāṃ nadaṃstiṣṭhati vānaraḥ /
yūthapānāṃ sahasrāṇāṃ śatena parivāritaḥ //
sugrīvasenādhipatirnīlo nāmāgninandanaḥ /
eṣa parvataśṛṅgābhaḥ padmakiñjalkasannibhaḥ//
sphoṭayatyabhisaṃrabdho lāṅgūlaṃ ca punaḥ punaḥ /
yuvarājo'ṅgado nāma vāliputro'tivīryavān //

Look, how these mountain-like monkeys are roaring menacingly and gesturing wildly! They cannot be counted, but I shall tell you about the chief ones amongst them (27).

This monkey, who is looking towards Lanka and repeatedly roaring aloud and is surrounded by one lakh (a hundred thousand) angry chieftains, is called Neel; he is the commander of Sugriv's army and is a son of the Fire God. He, who is colossus like the summit of a mountain (i.e. is very tall and huge), is yellow-skinned like a yellow lotus (28-29), and is whipping, thrashing, twirling and cracking his tail like a vicious whip, repeatedly, angrily and vehemently, is called prince Angad, the son of Vaali, and he is most valorous, valiant and manly (30).

येन दृष्टा जनकजा रामस्यातीववल्लभा। हनूमानेष विख्यातो हतो येन तवात्मजः।। 31।।
श्वेतो रजतसङ्काशो महाबुद्धिपराक्रमः। तूर्णं सुग्रीवमागम्य पुनर्गच्छति वानरः।। 32।।
यस्त्वेष सिंहसङ्काशः पश्यत्यतुलविक्रमः। रम्भो नाम महासत्त्वो लङ्कां नाशयितुं क्षमः।।33।।

yena dṛṣṭā janakajā rāmasyātīvavallabhā /
hanūmāneṣa vikhyāto hato yena tavātmajaḥ //
śveto rajatasaṅkāśo mahābuddhiparākramaḥ /
tūrṇaṃ sugrīvamāgamya punargacchati vānaraḥ //
yastveṣa siṃhasaṅkāśaḥ paśyatyatulavikramaḥ /
rambho nāma mahāsattvo laṅkāṃ nāśayituṃ kṣamaḥ //

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(Pointing towards Hanuman, Shuk said—) He, who had personally seen Janki (Sita), is the most beloved of Sri Ram. He had killed your son (Akshay Kumar), and is the same brave, courageous and renowned fellow known as Hanuman (31).

Next, that monkey whose radiance is grey like the colour of silver (i.e. who is white complexioned), who swiftly comes near Sugriv and then goes away, and who is very intelligent, sagacious, erudite and wise, very agile, industrious, diligent and active, and is most strong, brave, powerful and majestic, is called Rambh. He is looking intently in this direction. He alone is sufficiently capable of destroying Lanka (32-33).

एष पश्यति वै लङ्कां दिधक्षन्निव वानरः। शरभो नाम राजेन्द्र कोटियूथपनायकः।। 34।।
पनसश्च महावीर्यो मैन्दश्च द्विविदस्तथा। नलश्च सेतुकर्तासौ विश्वकर्मसुतो बली।। 35।।

eṣa paśyati vai laṅkāṃ didhakṣanniva vānaraḥ /
śarabho nāma rājendra koṭiyūthapanāyakaḥ //
panasaśca mahāvīryo maindaśca dvividastathā /
nalaśca setukartāsau viśvakarmasuto balī //

Oh King of kings (Ravana)! That another monkey—who is glaring fiercely at Lanka as he would burn it in a moment—is the senior captain having a crore (one million) commanders of monkey army under him. His name is Sharabh (34).

Besides them, the other chief warriors who are most strong, brave and courageous, most valiant and valorous, are Panas, Maind, Dwivid and Nal; the latter had tied the bridge and is a son of Vishwakarma (the architect of Gods) (35).

[Note :—Sharabh has been described as the leader of ten million army commanders. This perhaps indicates that he was the sovereign of a section of monkey army belonging to a separate country having its own numerous, or literally one crore, commanders or 'Yuth-Patis'. If the commanders number 1 crore or 10 million, the actual number of troops can be well imagined. Further, Rambh was white complexioned, and not like other monkeys; see verse nos. 32 above. This shows that he belongs to some race in the northern hemisphere, higher up in the mountains in the northern part India or somewhere in central Asia who had come to help Sugriv who was like an emperor of the monkey race.]

वानराणां वर्णने वा सङ्ख्याने वा क ईश्वरः। शूराः सर्वे महाकायाः सर्वे युद्धाभिकाङ्क्षिणः।। 36।।
शक्ताः सर्वे चूर्णयितुं लङ्कां रक्षोगणैः सह। एतेषां बलसङ्ख्यानं प्रत्येकं वच्मि ते शृणु।। 37।।

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vānarāṇāṃ varṇane vā saṅkhyāne vā ka īśvaraḥ /
śūrāḥ sarve mahākāyāḥ sarve yuddhābhikāṅkṣiṇaḥ //
śaktā sarve cūrṇayituṃ laṅkāṃ rakṣogaṇai saha /
eteṣāṃ balasaṅkhyānaṃ pratyekaṃ vacmi te śṛṇu //

Who has the ability to describe their countless numbers? All of them are very strong, brave, courageous, mighty and colossus, and all of them are eager for battle (36).

All of them are individually and jointly capable of crushing and smashing to smithereens the whole of Lanka along with its demons to a powder or pulp. Now I shall tell you the number of troops under each of them (i.e. the commanders named in verse nos. 28-35). Listen carefully (37).

एषां कोटिसहस्राणि नव पञ्च च सप्त च। तथा सङ्खसहस्राणि तथार्बुदशतानि च।। 38।।
सुग्रीवसचिवानां ते बलमेतत्प्रकीर्तितम्। अन्येषां तु बलं नाहं वक्तुं शक्तोऽस्मि रावण।। 39।।

eṣāṃ koṭisahastrāṇi nava pañca ca sapta ca /
tathā śaṅkhasahasrāṇi tathārbudaśatāni ca //
sugrīvasacivānāṃ te balametatprakīrtitam /
anyeṣāṃ tu balaṃ nāhaṃ vaktuṃ śakto'smi rāvaṇa //

Each of them (Nal, Neel, Angad, Hanuman, Rambh, Sharabh, Panas, Maind, Dwivid) have under them troops with a head count of twenty one thousand Crores, thousands of Shankhs and hundreds of Arabs (38). Oh Ravana! This is the huge size of the army of ministers of Sugriv only. Besides them, it is not possible at all for me to tell you about the army of others (who have joined forces with him against you) (39).

[Note :—1 Crore = 10 million; 1 Shankh = 10^6 millions; 1 Arab = 10^3 million. The above description of the size of the monkey army does not mean that a physical count was actually made. These astronomical and unbelievable figures may be an exaggeration of the actual number of soldiers. What it essentially indicates is that it was a formidably huge army in terms of man power. It extended on the ground till the horizon. It is obvious that no physical verification is possible. Perhaps Shuk meant to instill fear and awe in the heart of Ravana, and to dissuade him from going to war.]

रामो न मानुषः साक्षादादिनारायणः परः। सीता साक्षाज्जगद्धेतुश्चिच्छक्तिर्जगदात्मिका।। 40।।
ताभ्यामेव समुत्पन्नं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्। तस्मादाद्यश्च सीता च जगतस्तस्थुषश्च तौ।। 41।।
पितरौ पृथिवीपाल तयोर्वैरी कथं भवेत्। अजानता त्वयानीता जगन्मातैव जानकी।। 42।।

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rāmo na mānuṣaḥ sakṣādādināārāyaṇa paraḥ /
sītā sākṣājjagaddhetuścicchaktirjagadātmikā //
tābhyāmevasamutpannaṃ jagatsthāvarajaṅgamam /
tasmādrāmaśca sītā ca jagatastasthuṣaśca tau //
pitarau pṛthivīpāla tayorvairī kathaṃ bhavet /
ajānatā tvayānītā jaganmātaiva jānakī //

Even Sri Ram is not an ordinary human. He is the eternal 'Narayan Parmatma' himself, whereas Sita is the personification of the eternal, cosmic, infinite energy and pure consciousness, called Chitta Shakti, which is the very cause of the creation of the world (40).

The whole of this inanimate world (static, immovable world such as plants) as well as the animate world (mobile world which is full of life and activity, such as animals and birds and humans) has been created out of them (by their cosmic union). Therefore, Sri Ram and Sita are the parents (or ancestors) of this whole world (41).

Oh Lord of the earth (Ravana)! Just think deeply and ponder, how can anyone be their enemy? Janki (Sita), who has been brought by you inadvertently or out of ignorance, is indeed the mother of the whole world (say, then, how can you imagine to ever cast an evil eye on her, and how can you ever think that Lord Ram is your enemy, because they are your eternal parents?) (42).

क्षणनाशिनि संसारे शरीरे क्षणभङ्गुरे। पञ्चभूतात्मके राजंश्चतुर्विंशतितत्त्वके।। 43 ।।
मलमांसास्थिदुर्गन्धभूयिष्ठेऽहङ्कृतालये। कैवास्था व्यतिरिक्तस्य काये तव जडात्मके।।44।।

kṣaṇanāśini saṃsāre śarīre kṣaṇabhaṅgure /
pañcabhūtātmake rājaṃścaturviṃśatitattvake //
malamāṃsāsthidurgandhabhūyiṣṭhe'haṅkṛtālaye /
kaivāsthā vyatiriktasya kāye tava jaḍātmake //

Oh king! This world is mortal and it is perishable any moment. Similar is the fate of the bubble-like mortal body which is also subject to decay, and which can also perish any moment. This body is a literal motley collection of twenty four fundamental elements or principle nature[1], called 'Tattwas', which act as basic ingredients that together define this body made up of the so-called 'Panch Bhuts', or the five basic elements[2] that constitutes this whole world, including the individual body of the creature (43).

The body has predominance of dirty, abhorable, repulsive and

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stinking products like faecal matter, flesh, bones etc. Why do you have faith and reverence for such a gross, inert, reprehensible and worthless body which is the habitat of Ahankar (pride, ego, arrogance, vanity and haughtiness) and other vices? You are indeed discreetly separate from and distinct from it (44).

[Note :—[1]The 24 essential ingredients mentioned in verse no. 43 which go in to make up the body are—(a) Prakriti (nature, inherent tendencies and inclinations); (b) Buddhi (intellect, wisdom, discrimination); (c) Ahankar (pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness); (d) the eleven organs (5 organs of perceptions—eye, ear, nose, skin and tongue; 5 organs of action—hands, legs, mouth, genitals and excretory; 1 organ of intelligence—mind); and (e) the five vital Prans (the vital winds that regulate life in a creature—Pran or the life giving breath, Apaan or the wind which passes down the intestines and regulates digestion and excretion, Samaan or the wind that helps in even distribution of nourishment in the body, Vyan or the wind that maintains equilibrium in the body, and Udaan or the wind that helps to rise); and (f) the five perceptions (sight, touch, smell, taste and hearing) bringing the total to = 1+1+1+11+5+5 = 24.

[2]The 5 elements are—sky/space, air/wind, fire/energy, water, and earth/soil.]

यत्कृते ब्रह्महत्यादिपातकानि कृतानि ते। भोगभोक्ता तु यो देहः स देहोऽत्र पतिष्यति।।45।।
पुण्यपापे समायातो जीवेन सुखदुःखयोः। कारणे देहयोगादिनात्मनः कुरुतोऽनिशम्।।46।।

yatkṛte brahmahatyādipātakāni kṛtāni ca/
bhogabhoktā tu yo dehaḥ sa deho'tra patiṣyati//
puṇyapāpe samāyāto jīvena sukhaduḥkhayoḥ/
kāraṇe dehayogādinātmanaḥ kuruto'niśam//

Alas! The body for which you have done so many sins and misdeeds such as killing and tormenting of Brahmins etc.—that body which enjoys all the illusionary comforts and enjoyments of this world—will remain lying here (when your 'true self' shall depart from it at the time of death, one day or the other) (45).

The resultant effects and consequences of the good deeds and the evil deeds—which are done by the body and which are the root cause or reason of all happiness and sorrows respectively—accompany the creature (i.e. the soul) even after its death, and they are the ones which makes the creature feel happy or sorrowful, day and night, when it identifies itself with the body (46).

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[Note—The sense of happiness and joy as well as of sorrows and anguish are felt only because the creature, whose true and pure form is the Atma or soul, is led to believe that its identity is the gross body or that it is associated with the physical body. Due to the influence of ignorance the creature forgets that its true identity is the pure conscious Atma which is enlightened and eternal, and which is beyond the purview of the gross body as well as the taints associated with it. Since this realisation, the creature begins to remain detached from the body and its activities in this world. Therefore, it is not held responsible for the deeds done by the body. The wise and realised creature mentally remains free from the encumbrances pertaining to the body though it has to live in it as long as it has life, but at the time of death it simply and literally walks out of this body into the vast open space outside just like a prisoner walks out of the prison gates at the end of his term. In the absence of the gross body, the Atma has no relevance for the subtle body (i.e. the mind-intellect complex) because it does not need it to either receive any external stimuli or impulses from the external world or the need to process them and use them. Therefore, it remains blissfully ensconced in its habitat of the causal body, detached and dispassionate.]

यावद्देहोऽस्मि कर्तास्मीत्यात्माहंकुरुतेऽवशः। अध्यासात्तावदेव स्याज्जन्मनाशादिसम्भवः।।47।।
तस्मात्त्वं त्यज देहादावभिमानं महामते। आत्मातिनिर्मलः शुद्धो विज्ञानात्माचलोऽव्ययः।।48।।

yāvaddeho'smi kartāsmītyātmāhaṃkurute'vaśaḥ /
adhyāsāttāvadeva syājjanmanāśādisambhavaḥ //
tasmāttvaṃ tyaja dehādāvabhimānaṃ mahāmate /
ātmātinirmalaḥ śuddho vijñānātmācalo'vyayaḥ //

As long as the creature identifies its self—due to ignorance and the deluding effects of Maya—with the body, thinking erroneously that 'I am the body; I do a particular thing', it is only till then it is forced to suffer from birth and death etc. (47).

So, oh the wise one! You should forsake identifying yourself with your body and being proud of it (such as having pride of a good, healthy, powerful, strong and handsome body). The Atma (pure consciousness, soul or microcosmic reflection of the macrocosmic supreme Soul, the Lord Brahm) is most pure and immaculate, is an image or embodiment of pure consciousness, is uncorrupt and untainted, is enlightenment, wisdom, truthful knowledge and unequivocal reality personified, is eternal, steady, unwavering and unchanging, and is without any shortcomings, blemishes or faults of any kind (48).

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स्वाज्ञानवशतो बन्धं प्रतिपद्य विमुह्यति। तस्मात्त्वं शुद्धभावेन ज्ञात्वात्मानं सदा स्मर।। 49।।
विरतिं भज सर्वत्र पुत्रदारगृहादिषु। निरयेष्वपि भोगः स्याच्छ्वशूकरतनावपि।।50।।

svājñānavaśato bandhaṃ pratipadya vimuhyati /
tasmāttvaṃ śuddhabhāvena jñātvātmānaṃ sadā smara //
viratiṃ bhaja sarvatra putradāragṛhādiṣu /
nirayeṣvapi bhogaḥ syācchvaśūkaratanāvapi //

It is because of its own ignorance and lack of wisdom and truthful knowledge that the creature gets tied in shackles, and feels itself attached, infatuated and attracted towards this mundane, artificial and deluding world of sensual objects. Hence, you must realise the pure and true nature of your Atma and keep yourself always aware of this fact. [This constant remembrance or awareness will prevent or stop you from going astray from the path of righteousness, probity, nobility, propriety and wisdom.] (49).

You should become dispassionate towards (i.e. detached, renunciate and uninvolved with) your worldly relations such as sons, wife, household etc., because pleasures and comforts can be found even in the form or the body of a dog or a pig, forms or lives that are nothing less than hell (50).

देहं लब्ध्वा विवेकाढ्यं द्विजत्वं च विशेषतः। तत्रापि भारते वर्षे कर्मभूमौ सुदुर्लभम्।। 51।।
को विद्वानात्मसात्कृत्वा देहं भोगानुगो भवेत्। अतस्त्वं ब्राह्मणो भूत्वा पौलस्त्यतनयश्च सन्।।52।।
अज्ञानीव सदा भोगाननुधावसि किं मुधा। इतः परं वा त्यक्त्वा त्वं सर्वसङ्गं समाश्रय।।53।।
राममेव परात्मानं भक्तिभावेन सर्वदा। सीतां समर्प्य रामाय तत्पादानुचरो भव।।54।।

dehaṃ labdhvā vivekāḍhyaṃ dvijatvaṃ ca viśeṣataḥ /
tatrāpi bhārate varṣe karmabhūmau sudurlabham //
ko vidvānātmasātkṛtvā dehaṃ bhogānugo bhavet /
atastvaṃ brāhmaṇo bhūtvā paulastyatanayaśca san //
ajñānīva sadā bhogānanudhāvasi kiṃ mudhā /
itaḥ paraṃ vā tyaktvā tvaṃ sarvasaṅgaṃ samāśrayaḥ //
rāmameva parātmanaṃ bhaktibhāvena sarvadā /
sītāṃ samarpya rāmāya tatpādānucaro bhava //

A person who has righteous and noble thoughts (i.e. who has wisdom, intelligence and discrimination), specially one who is fortunate in having the body of a wise Brahmin and being born in the land of Bharat (i.e. in India) which is famed as a 'Karma Bhumi' (the

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land of deeds) (51)—who is such foolish among them who would identify himself with the body or feel proud of it and waste his time and energy in sensual pleasures related with it? You (Ravana) being a Brahmin by birth and born in the clan of Pulastaya (52), why do you run fruitlessly behind these sensual pleasures like an ignorant, foolhardy and stupid fellow? Hence, from today onwards you should completely abandon and forsake for good all types of attachments, infatuations and the sense of belonging that you have to the body and your family and the world etc. (53), and instead of this, you should take shelter, with full devotion and dedication, with the supreme Lord who Sri Ram is. You should surrender or offer Sita to Sri Ram and serve his lotus-like holy feet (instead of confronting him) (54).

विमुक्तः सर्वपापेभ्यो विष्णुलोकं प्रयास्यसि। नो चेद्गमिष्यसेऽधोऽधः पुनरावृत्तिवर्जितः।
अङ्गीकुरुष्व मद्वाक्यं हितमेव वदामि ते।।55।।

vimuktaḥ sarvapāpebhyo viṣṇulokaṃ prayāsyasi/
no cedgamiṣyase'dho'dhaḥ punarāvṛttivarjitaḥ/
aṅgīkuruṣva madvākyaṃ hitameva vadāmi te//

If you do so (i.e. if you follow my advise), you shall be freed from (the effects of) all sins evils, misdeeds and misdemeanors, and attain the abode of Lord Vishnu. Otherwise, instead of climbing higher in the spiritual ladder, you would go further down in the nether world, literally and metaphorically, to hell or to a stage which is spiritually most condemned, downgraded and reprehensible, and from where you will continue to slip back again and again into hell, being surrounded by vices, evils, sins and misdemeanors of all sorts. I am telling you about your own welfare and well-being; you must accept it (literally, embrace it) for your own sake (55).

सत्सङ्गतिं कुरु भजस्व हरिं शरण्यं श्रीराघवं मरकतोपलकान्तिकान्तम्।
सीतासमेतमनिशं धृतचापबाणं सुग्रीवलक्ष्मणविभीषणसेविताङ्घ्रिम्।।56।।

satsaṅgatiṃ kuru bhajasva hariṃ śaraṇyaṃ
śrīrāghavaṃ marakatopalakāntikāntam/
sītāsametamaniśaṃ dhṛtacāpabaṇaṃ
sugrīvalakṣmaṇavibhīṣaṇasevitāṅghrim//

You should spend your time in the community of saints (thinking, talking, hearing, reading etc. about the Lord God and sacred topics). You should worship, adore and have devotion for Lord Ram, and

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shelter and refuge in the feet of Hari (Lord Vishnu) who has personified himself as Raghav (Sri Ram). He has a radiance resembling the Markat Mani (emerald), and he is served by Sugriv, Laxman and Vibhishan. You must have devotion and dedication for the bow and arrow bearing Sri Ram who is accompanied by Sita' (56).

[Note :—Verse nos. 38-56 can be called the gospel of Shuk.]

***

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 5

Previous life of Shuk; Malyawan attempts to dissuade Ravana; The monkey-demon war starts

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

श्रुत्वा शुकमुखोद्गीतं वाक्यमज्ञाननाशनम्। रावणः क्रोधताम्राक्षो दहन्निव तमब्रवीत्।। 1।।
अनुजीव्य सुदुर्बुद्धे गुरुवद्भाषसे कथम्। शासिताहं त्रिजगतां त्वं मां शिक्षन्न लज्जसे।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

śrutvā śukamukhodgītaṃ vākyamajñānanāśanam /
rāvaṇaḥ krodhatāmrākṣo dahanniva tamabravīt //
anujīvya sudurbuddhe guruvadbhāṣase katham /
śāsitāhaṃ trijagatāṃ tvaṃ māṃ śikṣanna lajjase //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing these words of Shuk which were capable of destroying (eliminating, removing) ignorance and stupidity, Ravana felt exasperated, indignant and appalled (instead of feeling pleased that at least there was one sincere and honest advisor with him who would tell him that thing which appears unpleasant on the face of it but was good for the entire demon race in the long run). He appeared to be burning with rage and said to Shuk with eyes red with indignant wrath and fierce anger (1), 'Oh you wretched and wicked one with a corrupt and pervert mind! You are sustained (nourished) by the morsels of food given to you by me; how dare you speak to me like my Guru (teacher)? I am the one who rules over the three worlds (subterranean, terrestrial, celestial worlds)—don't you feel ashamed at preaching me? (2).

इदानीमेव हन्मि त्वां किन्तु पूर्वकृतं तव। स्मरामि तेन रक्षामि त्वां यद्यपि वधोचितम्।। 3।।
इतो गच्छ विमूढ त्वमेवं श्रोतुं न मे क्षमम्। महाप्रसाद इत्युक्त्वा वेपमानो गृहं ययौ।। 4।।

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idānīmeva hanmi tvāṃ kintu pūrvakṛtaṃ tava /
smarāmi tena rakṣāmi tvāṃ yadyapi vadhocitam //
ito gaccha vimūḍha tvamevaṃ śrotuṃ na me kṣamam /
mahāprasāda ityuktvā vepamāno gṛhaṃ yayau //

You are fit to be killed by me, and I would have killed you on the spot immediately, but I hesitate in doing so considering your past deeds (i.e. recalling your faithful service since a very long time). I am sparing you (3). Oh you wretched idiot! Get away from here immediately. I do not wish to hear such things any more'.

Hearing these angry and scornful words of rebuke and reproach from Ravana, Shuk said—'Thank you Lord. Your words are like blessing for me'. Then he went home, shaking with fear (4).

शुकोऽपि ब्राह्मणः पूर्वं ब्रह्मिष्ठो ब्रह्मवित्तमः। वानप्रस्थविधानेन वने तिष्ठन् स्वकर्मकृत्।। 5।।
देवानामभिवृद्ध्यर्थं विनाशाय सुरद्विषाम्। चकार यज्ञवितितमविच्छिन्नां महामतिः।।6।।

śuko'pi brāhmaṇaḥ pūrvaṃ brahmiṣṭho brahmavittamaḥ /
vānaprasthāvidhānena vane tiṣṭhan svakarmakṛt //
devānāmabhivṛddhyarthaṃ vināśāya suradviṣām /
cakāra yajñavitatimavicchinnāṃ mahāmatiḥ //

[Verse nos. 5-24 describe the story of the previous life of Shuk—] In his previous life, Shuk was a Brahmin who was an expert in the Vedas and steeped in the knowledge of the Brahm, the supreme Lord. He lived in the forest industriously following the rules and tenets pertaining to the 3rd stage of life called 'Van Prastha'[1] (i.e. heading for the forest with total detachment from the world and family ties, usually done when old age approaches after fifty years of life) (5). This wise one had done huge fire sacrifices for the enhancement (and protection) of the interest of Gods as well as for the destruction of the demons (who were tormenting ordinary creatures of the world without any rhyme or reason) (6).

[Note—[1]The life of a man is divided into four segments or Ashrams — (a) Brahmacharya—this is the 1st phase of life in which a person studies the scriptures under the tutelage of a wise teacher. This phase of life is marked by austerities, keeping of vows, observing celibacy, abstinence and continence as well as leading a regimental life style, (b) Grihastha—when a person has studied and prepared himself to face the world, he comes back to his house and enters the second phase called Grihastha Ashram which is a householder life. He marries, raises a family, produces

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wealth and helps to carry forward the cycle of creation. This is the most important and enjoyable phase as well as the most tough one because on the one hand there are the comforts and pleasure of the world to be enjoyed, and on the other hand there are the various tribulations and miseries of a family life and dealings with this deceptive world with all their accompanying horrifying problems, (c) Vaanprastha—this is the 3rd phase when a man hands over the responsibilities of the world to his heirs and renounces his attachments to the house as well as the world, and heads for the forest, leaving the home for his next generation. It is now that he goes on pilgrimage and prepares for the final stage of his life, and (d) Sanyas—this is the 4th and last stage of life when there is complete cutting off of all the ties with the world, spending time in contemplation and mediation, living a life of total renunciation and begging for food, and single mindedly aiming for emancipation and salvation.

These four Ashrams, their characteristic features and virtues are described in detail in an Upanishad called 'Ashramo-panishad' belonging to the Atharva Veda tradition.]

राक्षसानां विरोधोऽभूच्छुको देवहितोद्यतः। वज्रादंष्ट्र इति ख्यातस्तत्रैको राक्षसो महान्।। 7।।
अन्तरं प्रेप्सुरातिष्ठच्छुकापकरणोद्यतः। कदाचिदागतोऽगस्त्यस्तस्याश्रमपदं मुनेः।।8।।

rākṣasānāṃ virodho'bhūcchuko devahitodyataḥ/
vajradaṃṣṭra iti khyātastatraiko rākṣaso mahān//
antaraṃ prepsurātiṣṭhacchukāpakaraṇodyataḥ/
kadācidāgato'gastyastasyāśramapadaṃ muneḥ//

Therefore, since he was pursuing the interest of Gods, he antagonized the demons. A great demon named Vajra Danstra (literally one whose teeth were strong like the strongest weapon in creation, called Vajra, which is in possession of Indra, the king of Gods) (7) wanted to harm him (i.e. either eliminate him altogether by killing him, or putting a spanner in the wheel of his endeavours by continuously tormenting him and defiling his fire sacrifices). Therefore, he was on the look out for an opportunity. It so happened that one day, sage Agastya came to the hermitage of sage Shuk (8).

तेन सम्पूजितोऽगस्त्यो भोजनार्थं निमन्त्रितः। गते स्नातुं मुनौ कुम्भसम्भवे प्राप्य चान्तरम्।। 9।।
अगस्त्यरूपधृक् सोऽपि राक्षसः शुकमब्रवीत्। यदि दास्यसि मे ब्रह्मन् भोजनं देहि सामिषम्।। 10।।
बहुकालं न भुक्तं मे मांसं छागाङ्गसम्भवम्। तथेति कारयामास मांसभोज्यं सविस्तरम्।। 11।।

tena sampūjito'gastyo bhojanārthaṃ nimantritaḥ/
gate snātuṃ munau kumbhasambhave prāpya cāntaram//

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agastyarūpadhṛk so'pi rākṣasaḥ śukamabravīt /
yadi dāsyasi me brahman bhojanaṃ dehi sāmiṣam //
bahukālaṃ na bhuktaṃ me māṃsaṃ chāgāṅgasambhavam /
tatheti kārayāmāsa māṃsabhojyaṃ savistaram //

He (Shuk) worshipped and welcomed him (Agastya) and invited him for meals. When the latter had gone to have his bath, the wicked demon (Vajra Danstra) saw an opportunity (9). He assumed the form (identity) of sage Agastya and said to Shuk, 'Oh Brahmin, if you indeed wish to serve me meals, then give me non-vegetarian food (which has meat included in it) (10). For a long time I have not eaten mutton'.

In order to please the guest and live up to the great tradition of hospitality that saintly and pious men are renowned for, he said—'as you wish', and swiftly prepared an elaborate non-vegetarian dish (consisting of meat) for the sage (11).

उपविष्टे मुनौ भोक्तुं राक्षसोऽतीव सुन्दरम्। शुकभार्यावपुर्धृत्वा तां चान्तर्मोहयन् खलः ।। 12 ।।
नरमांसं ददौ तस्मै सुपक्वं बहुविस्तरम्। दत्त्वैवान्तर्दधे रक्षस्ततो दृष्ट्वा चुकोप सः ।। 13 ।।

upaviṣṭe munau bhoktuṃ rākṣaso'tīva sundaram /
śukabhāryāvapurdhṛtvā tāṃ cāntarmohayan khalaḥ //
naramāṃsaṃ dadau tasmai supakvaṃ bahuvistaram /
dattvaivāntardadhe rakṣastato dṛṣṭvā cukopa saḥ //

When the sage (Agastya) sat down for his meals, that wicked imposter demon assumed the beautiful form of Shuk's wife, made her faint inside the hermitage, and served the sage various types of human meat dishes prepared elaborately, tastefully, carefully and diligently. Having done so, that demon stealthily vanished from sight (12-13).

[Note :—The imposter had asked for goat meat, but in his zeal and enthusiasm to please his guest, sage Shuk even prepared human flesh! This over enthusiasm on his part was his undoing. Besides this, Shuk should have become suspicious of something amiss when the demand for meat dish was made—he should have wondered why a sage as great and exalted as Agastya will ever wish to eat meat. This episode also highlights that one should not follow instructions blindly if they are against established traditions, ethics, principles of morality and simple common sense. Such precautions could have prevented Shuk from committing such an unpardonable sin as serving meat dish to a sage.]

अमेध्यं मानुषं मांसमगस्त्यः शुकमब्रवीत्। अभक्ष्यं मानुषं मांसं दत्तवानसि दुर्मते ।। 14 ।।
मह्यं त्वं राक्षसो भूत्वा तिष्ठ त्वं मानुषाशनः। इति शप्तः शुको भीत्या प्राहागस्त्यं मुने त्वया ।। 15 ।।

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इदानीं भाषितं मेऽद्य मांसं देहीति विस्तरम्। तथैव दत्तं भो देव किं मे शापं प्रदास्यसि।। 16।।

amedhyaṃ mānuṣaṃ māṃsamagastyaḥ śukamabravīt /
abhakṣyaṃ mānuṣaṃ māṃsaṃ dattavānasi durmate //
mahyaṃ tvaṃ rākṣaso bhūtvā tiṣṭha tvaṃ mānuṣāśanaḥ /
iti śaptaḥ śuko bhītyā prāhāgastyaṃ mune tvayā //
idānīṃ bhāṣitaṃ me'dya māṃsaṃ dehīti vistaram /
tathaiva dattaṃ bho deva kiṃ me śāpaṃ pradāsyasi //

Seeing human meat, which is not to be eaten at any cost, served in front of him, sage Agastya (flew into a rage, felt appalled and) said to Shuk (in utter indignation and stunned dismay), 'Oh you rascal! You have given me human flesh to eat! (14). So you should become a man eating demon (an ogre)'.

When Agastya had thus cursed him, Shuk was most shocked and terrified, and he pleaded, 'Oh sage! (15). You had just told me a little while ago that you wish to eat various types of meat preparations. So, oh Lord, I have given you meat dishes as per your own instructions; say, then, why do you curse me?' (16).

श्रुत्वा शुकस्य वचनं मुहूर्तं ध्यानमास्थितः। ज्ञात्वा रक्षःकृतं सर्वं ततः प्राह शुकं सुधीः।। 17।।
तवापकारिणा सर्वं राक्षसेन कृतं त्विदम्। अविचार्यैव मे दत्तः शापस्ते मुनिसत्तम।। 18।।

śrutvā śukasya vacanaṃ muhūrtaṃ dhyānamāsthitaḥ /
jñātvā rakṣaḥkṛtaṃ sarvaṃ tataḥ prāha śukaṃ sudhīḥ //
tavāpakāriṇā sarvaṃ rākṣasena kṛtaṃ tvidam /
avicāryaiva me dattaḥ śāpaste munisattama //

Hearing this plea of innocence expressed in humble words of shock and surprise by Shuk, the most enlightened sage Agastya sat in meditation for a Muhurt (roughly 1 hour and 48 minutes; here meaning for a short time) and became aware of the mischief and misdeeds of the demon (Vajra Danstra).

Then he said to Shuk (17), 'Oh the best among sages! All this deed is the handiwork of a demon who wishes to harm you. I have cursed you without thinking (i.e. without any rhyme or reason; without your fault) (18).

तथापि मे वचोऽमोघमेवमेव भविष्यति। राक्षसं वपुरास्थाय रावणस्य सहायकृत्।। 19।।
तिष्ठ तावद्यदा रामो दशाननवधाय हि। आगमिष्यति लङ्कायाः समीपं वानरैः सह।। 20।।

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tathāpi me vaco'moghamevameva bhaviṣyati /
rākṣasaṃ vapurāsthāya rāvaṇasya sahāyakṛt //
tiṣṭha tāvadyadā rāmo daśānanavadhāya hi /
āgamiṣyati laṅkāyāḥ samīpaṃ vānaraiḥ saha //

Inspite of it (i.e. your being not at fault), my words cannot go in vain. So, it is going to happen as I have said. Assuming the body of a demon, you should now go and serve Ravana (19) till the time Sri Ram comes near Lanka, along with the monkeys, to destroy (kill) him (20).

प्रेषितो रावणेन त्वं चारो भूत्वा रघूत्तमम्। दृष्ट्वा शापाद्विनिर्मुक्तो बोधयित्वा च रावणम्।। 21 ।।
तत्त्वज्ञानं ततो मुक्तः परं पदमवाप्स्यसि। इत्युक्तोऽगस्त्यमुनिना शुको ब्राह्मणसत्तमः।। 22 ।।
बभूव राक्षसः सद्यो रावणं प्राप्य संस्थितः। इदानीं चाररूपेण दृष्ट्वा रामं सहानुजम्।। 23 ।।
रावणं तत्त्वविज्ञानं बोधयित्वा पुनर्द्रुतम्। पूर्ववद्ब्राह्मणो भूत्वा स्थितो वैखानसैः सह।। 24 ।।

preṣito rāvaṇena tvaṃ cāro bhūtvā raghūttamam /
dṛṣṭvā śāpādvinirmukto bodhayitvā ca rāvaṇam //
tattvajñānaṃ tato muktaḥ paraṃ padamavāpsyasi /
ityukto'gastyamuninā śako brahmaṇasattama //
babhūva rākṣasaḥ sadyo rāvaṇaṃ prāpya saṃsthitaḥ /
idānīṃ cārarūpeṇa dṛṣṭvā rāmaṃ sahānujam //
rāvaṇaṃ tattvavijñānaṃ bodhayitvā punardrutam /
pūrvavadbrāhmaṇo bhūtvā sthito vaikhānasaiḥ saha //

Then you will go to the most exalted amongst the Raghus (Sri Ram) as a messenger dispatched by Ravana. By having his (Sri Ram's) divine Darshan (sight), you shall be freed from this curse. After that you would teach Ravana the wisdom pertaining to the supreme Truth (21) and get yourself emancipated and delivered to attain the supreme stature called 'Param Pad' (which is being one with the Lord and obtaining closeness with him in his supreme abode; in this case it refers to Shuk's deliverance from his evil demon body and regaining his original virtuous body as a learned and religious Brahmin)'.

When sage Agastya had said so, the most exalted Brahmin Shuk (22) came and joined the company of Ravana. Presently, having had the privileged opportunity to see Sri Ram along with his younger brother (Laxman) (23) and having preached the essential truths to Ravana, he reverted back to his earlier form of a Brahmin and came to live amongst the other 'Van Prasthas' (forest dwelling monks, mendicants, sages, ascetics and hermits) (24).

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ततः समागमद्वृद्धो माल्यवान् राक्षसो महान्। बुद्धिमान्नीतिनिपुणो राज्ञो मातुः प्रियः पिता।। 25।।
प्राह तं राक्षसं वीरं प्रशान्तेनान्तरात्मना। शृणु राजन्वचो मेऽद्य श्रुत्वा कुरु यथेप्सितम्।।26।।

tataḥ samāgamadvṛddho mālyavān rākṣaso mahān /
buddhimānnītinipuṇo rājño mātuḥ priyaḥ pitā //
prāha taṃ rākṣasaṃ vīraṃ praśāntenāntarātmanā /
śṛṇu rājanvaco me'dya śrutvā kuru yathepsitam //

[Coming back to the story and verse no. 4, Lord Shiva continues with his narration—] When Shuk had gone from there, Malyavan, who was wise, intelligent and prudent, well versed in rules, regulations and codes of conducd, was old and experienced, a great demon and a beloved father of the king's (Ravana's) mother, came there (25). He calmly said to that brave demon (Ravana), 'Oh king! Listen to my words carefully. Then do as you think fit (26).

[Note :—Verse no. 25 tells us that Malyavan was Ravana's maternal grandfather.]

यदा प्रविष्टा नगरीं जानकी रामवल्लभा। तदादि पुर्यां दृश्यन्ते निमित्तानि दशानन।। 27।।
घोराणि नाशहेतूनि तानि मे वदतः शृणु। खरस्तनितनिर्घोषा मेघा अतिभयङ्कराः।। 28।।
शोणितेनाभिवर्षन्ति लङ्कामुष्णेन सर्वदा। रुदन्ति देवलिङ्गानि स्विद्यन्ति प्रचलन्ति च।।29।।

yadā praviṣṭā nagarīṃ jānakī rāmavallabhā /
tadādi puryāṃ dṛśyante nimittani daśānana //
ghorāṇi nāśahetūni tāni me vadataḥ śṛṇu /
kharastanitanirghoṣā meghā atibhayaṅkarāḥ //
śoṇitenābhivarṣanti laṅkāmuṣṇena sarvadā /
rudanti devaliṅgāni svidyanti pracalanti ca //

'Oh the 10-headed one! Ever since the beloved of Sri Ram, Janki, has entered the city, horrifying and awfully bad omens portending destruction and havoc are evident and visible everywhere. I shall tell (describe) them to you, listen. Very frightening dark clouds thunder and clap menacingly with sharp bolts of lightening streaking through them (27-28), and they pour hot blood over Lanka incessantly. The idols of Gods etc. weep, their images perspire, and they topple ominously and without any apparent cause from their pedestals (29).

कालिका पाण्डुरैर्दन्तैः प्रहसत्यग्रतः स्थिता। खरा गोषु प्रजायन्ते मूषका नकुलैः सह।। 30।।
मार्जरिण तु युध्यन्ति पन्नगा गरुडेन तु। करालो विकटो मुण्डः पुरुषः कृष्णपिङ्गलः।।31।।
कालो गृह्णाणि सर्वेषां काले काले त्ववेक्षते। एतान्यन्यानि दृश्यन्ते निमित्तान्युद्भवन्ति च।।32।।

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kālikā pāṇḍurairdantaiḥ prahasatyagrataḥ sthitā /
kharā goṣu prajāyante mūṣakā nakulaiḥ saha //
mārjāreṇa tu yuddhyanti pannagā garuḍena tu /
karālo vikaṭo muṇḍaḥ puruṣaḥ kṛṣṇapiṅgalaḥ //
kālo gṛhāṇi sarveṣāṃ kāle kāle tvavekṣate /
etānyanyāni dṛśyante nimittanyudbhavanti ca //

Kalika (a demoness representing death) bares her yellow teeth and laughs tauntingly and menacingly in front of demons; the cows give birth to donkeys, while rats fight with cats and mongoose (30), and serpents with herons and eagles. Off and on, a very horrifying, colossus, bare headed death-like figure called Kaal Purush (literally death personified), which is black or yellow in complexion, keeps on staring horridly at the households of the city (indicating that these houses are marked for death). In a similar manner, many black (dark) and most inauspicious signs are seen being produced everywhere, portending disaster (31-32).

अतः कुलस्य रक्षार्थं शान्तिं कुरु दशानन। सीतां सत्कृत्य सधनां रामायाशु प्रयच्छ भोः ।। 33 ।।
रामं नारायणं विद्धि विद्वेषं त्यज राघवे। यत्पादपोतमाश्रित्य ज्ञानिनो भवसागरम् ।। 34 ।।
तरन्ति भक्तिपूतान्तास्ततो रामो न मानुषः। भजस्व भक्तिभावेन रामं सर्वह्रदालयम् ।। 35 ।।

ataḥ kulasya rakṣārthaṃ śāntiṃ kuru daśānana /
sītāṃ satkṛtya sadhanāṃ rāmāyāśu prayacchaḥ bhoḥ //
rāmaṃ nārāyaṇaṃ viddhi vidveṣaṃ tyaja rāghave /
yatpādapotamāśritya jñānino bhavasāgaram //
taranti bhaktipūtāntāstato rāmo na mānuṣaḥ /
bhajasva bhaktibhāvena rāmaṃ sarvahṛdālayam //

Therefore, oh the 10-headed one, you must, as a king, calm them (i.e. pacify them by taking positive remedial steps and abandoning your belligerent attitude) in order to safeguard and protect your race and clan. You must immediately give Sita back to Sri Ram with full honours and a lot of precious gifts as tribute (as a gesture of peace and a token of compromise and willingness for peaceful settlement with the invading army) (33).

You must treat Sri Ram as Narayan (Vishnu) himself. So forget about any opposition, animosity, hostility, malice and ill-will with him. By taking the help (shelter, refuse) of a boat in the form of Raghav's (Sri Ram's) lotus-like holy feet, those who are wise, enlightened and realised, whose internal being has been purified by

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sincere and unwavering devotion, dedication, adoration and faith for the Lord, cross this ocean-like mundane, deluding world. So, Sri Ram is not an ordinary human. You must worship, honour, respect, adore and have faith in and devotion for Sri Ram who resides in the heart of all the creatures who have sincere devotion, conviction, faith and belief in him (34-35).

यद्यपि त्वं दुराचारो भक्त्या पूतो भविष्यसि। मद्वाक्यं कुरु राजेन्द्र कुलकौशलहेतवे।। 36।।
तत्तु माल्यवतो वाक्यं हितमुक्तं दशाननः। न मर्षयति दुष्टात्मा कालस्य वशमागतः।। 37।।

yadyapi tvaṃ durācāro bhaktyā pūto bhaviṣyasi/
madvākyaṃ kuru rājendra kulakauśalahetave//
tattu mālyavato vākyaṃ hitamuktaṃ daśānanaḥ/
na marṣayati duṣṭātmā kālasya vaśamāgataḥ//

Though your external behaviours, actions, characters and deeds are not good and auspicious (i.e. you are full of those qualities that are regarded as vice, sinful, evil and pervert; your misdemeanors and perversions as well as unrighteousness and impropriety are self-evident), you still can become pure and purged of these vices and their evil effects by having the Lord's Bhakti (devotion, faith and conviction in the Lord, worshipping and following his path, and forsaking your evil thoughts and demeanors). Oh King of kings! Accept my words of good advice for the welfare of your race and clan' (36).

But these well intentioned words of Malyawan which were for his own good and welfare could not become palatable to the evil and wicked Ravana because he was under the spell of 'Kaal' (death and destruction) and would not listen to what was good for him. So he took umbrage at the suggestions and treated the advice as an affront to his majesty (37).

मानवं कृपणं राममेकं शाखामृगाश्रयम्। समर्थं मन्यसे केन हीन पित्रा मुनिप्रियम्।। 38।।
रामेण प्रेषितो नूनं भाषसे त्वमनर्गलम्। गच्छ वृद्धोऽसि बन्धुस्त्वं सोढं सर्वं त्वयोदितम्।।39।।

mānavaṃ kṛpaṇaṃ rāmamekaṃ śākhāmṛgāśrayam/
samarthaṃ manyase kena hīnaṃ pitrā munipriyam//
rāmeṇa preṣito nūnaṃ bhāṣase tvamanargalam/
gaccha vṛddho'si bandhustvaṃ soḍhaṃ sarvaṃ tvayoditam//

He said contemptuously, 'In what respect do you consider Sri Ram—who is but a poor, lowly and humble human—able and

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competent, especially when he has taken the help of those who reside on the branches of trees (i.e. monkeys), and who has been exiled even by his own father thinking that he was no good? He is only loved by sages, hermits, seers, ascetics etc. (38).

It looks that Sri Ram has sent you as his advocate to mislead me by creating a smoke screen of fear in my mind, and that is why you talk such nuisance. Go, you are old and my relative (maternal grandfather; see verse no. 25), so I have tolerated whatever you have said (otherwise, I would have killed you) (39).

इतो मत्कर्णपदवीं दहत्येतद्वचस्तव। इत्युक्त्वा सर्वसचिवैः सहितः प्रस्थितस्तदा।।40।।
प्रासादाग्रे समासीनः पश्यन् वानरसैनिकान्। युद्धायायोजयत्सर्वराक्षसान्समुपस्थितान्।।41।।

ito matkarṇapadavīṃ dahatyetadvacastava /
ityuktvā sarvasacivaiḥ sahitaḥ prasthitastadā //
prāsādāgre samāsinaḥ paśyanvānarasainikān /
yuddhāyāyojayatsarvarākṣasānsamupasthitān //

But (enough is enough), your words scorch my ears'. Saying this most disdainfully and rebuking Malyavan sternly, he (Ravana) went from there along with all his ministers (40).

Then he climbed atop and sat on the highest terrace of his palace and watched the monkey army. He started appointing and assigning specific duties to the demons, who were sitting around him, in preparation for the war (41).

रामोऽपि धनुरादाय लक्ष्मणेन समाहृतम्। दृष्ट्वा रावणमासीनं कोपेन कलुषीकृतः।।42।।
किरीटिनं समासीनं मन्त्रिभिः परिवेष्टितम्। शशाङ्कार्धनिभेनैव बाणेनैकेन राघवः।।43।।
श्वेतच्छत्रसहस्राणि किरीटदशकं तथा। चिच्छेद निमिषार्धेन तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्।।44।।

rāmo'pi dhanurādāya lakṣmaṇena samāhṛtam /
dṛṣṭvā rāvaṇamāsīnaṃ kopena kaluṣīkṛtaḥ //
kirīṭinaṃ samāsīnaṃ mantribhiḥ pariveṣṭitam /
saśāṅkārdhanibhenaiva bāṇenaikena rāghavaḥ //
svetacchatrasahasrāṇi kirīṭadaśakaṃ tathā /
ciccheda nimiṣārdhena tadadbhutamivābhavat //

Here meanwhile, Sri Ram saw Ravana sitting atop the terrace and angrily lifted the bow brought to him by Laxman (42). He (Ravana) had crowns on his head and was sitting surrounded by his council of ministers. Then, using an arrow with a semi-circular head (i.e. an arrow

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with a scythe or sickle-like head), Raghav (Sri Ram) (43) cut-off thousands of white ceremonial umbrellas which were over his head along with all the ten crowns which he wore. It was like a miraculous feat and was most astonishingly done in half a moment (44).

लज्जितो रावणस्तूर्णं विवेश भवनं स्वकम्। आहूय राक्षसान् सर्वान्प्रहस्तप्रमुखान् खलः।। 45।।
वानरैः सह युद्धाय नोदयामास सत्वरः। ततो भेरीमृदङ्गाद्यैः पणवानकगोमुखैः।। 46।।
महिषोष्ट्रैः खरैः सिंहैर्द्वीपिभिः कृतवाहनाः। खड्गशूलधनुःपाशयष्टितोमरशक्तिभिः।। 47।।
लक्षिताः सर्वतो लङ्कां प्रतिद्वारमुपाययुः। तत्पूर्वमेव रामेण नोदिता वानरर्षभाः।। 48।।

lajjito rāvaṇastūrṇaṃ viveśa bhavanaṃ svakam/
āhūya rākṣasān sarvānprahastapramukhān khalaḥ//
vānaraiḥ saha yuddhāya nodayāmāsa satvaraḥ/
tato bherīmṛdaṅgādyaiḥ paṇavānakagomukhaiḥ//
mahiṣoṣṭraiḥ kharaiḥ siṃhairdvīpibhiḥ kṛtavāhanāḥ/
khaḍgaśūladhanuḥpāśayaṣṭitomaraśaktibhiḥ //
lakṣitāḥ sarvato laṅkāṃ pratidvāramupāyayuḥ/
tatpūrvameva rāmeṇa noditā vānararṣabhāḥ//

Being extremely ashamed, peeved and humiliated at it, Ravana immediately went inside his palace. He summoned Prahast and all other chief demons (45), and ordered them to start the war forthwith with the monkeys. [The battle actually begins from here.] Then the demons sounded various musical instruments as a war cry and a clarion call for the final out-break of hostilities. These instruments were kettledrums, drums, cymbals, bugles etc.; the demons rode different animals such as buffaloes, camels and donkeys, lions and tigers; they were armed to the teeth with swords, tridents, bows, slings, rods, batons and sticks, spears and arrows and other forms of missiles and weapons of war. Then they appeared at each of the entrance gates of Lanka. Meanwhile, Sri Ram had already given necessary go-ahead (orders) to his monkey commanders (45-48).

उद्यम्य गिरिशृङ्गाणि शिखराणि महान्ति च। तरूंश्चोत्पाट्य विविधान्युद्धाय हरियूथपाः।। 49।।
प्रेक्षमाणा रावणस्य तान्यनीकानि भागशः। राघवप्रियकामार्थं लङ्कामारुरुहुस्तदा।। 50।।

udyamya giriśṛṅgāṇi śikharāṇi mahānti ca/
tarūṃścotpāṭya vividhānyuddhāya hariyūthapāḥ//
prekṣamāṇā rāvaṇasya tānyanīkāni bhāgaśaḥ/
rāghavapriyakāmārthaṃ laṅkāmāruruhustadā//

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Hence, the monkeys picked up large rocks and boulders from mountain tops, uprooted different types of large trees, and proceeded for battle. They saw the different sections of Ravana's troops stationed at different approach gates, and climbed upon the ramparts of (the fort of) Lanka to do Raghav's (Sri Ram's) work which was most important and very dear to him (49-50).

ते द्रुमैः पर्वताग्रैश्च मुष्टिभिश्च प्लवङ्गमाः। ततः सहस्रयूथाश्च कोटियूथाश्च यूथपाः।। 51।।
कोटिशतयुताश्चान्ये रुरुधुर्नगरं भृशम्। आप्लवन्तः प्लवन्तश्च गर्जन्तश्च प्लवङ्गमाः।। 52।।

te drumaiḥ parvatāgraiśca muṣṭibhiśca plavaṅgamāḥ/
tataḥ sahasrayūthāśca koṭiyūthāśca yūthapāḥ//
koṭiśatayutāścānye rurudhurnagaraṃ bhṛśam/
āplavantaḥ plavantaśca garjantaśca plavaṅgamāḥ//

Out of them (i.e. the invading monkey commanders), some were the commanders of one thousand troops, some of ten lakh (one million) and still others of a hundred lakhs (ten million) and more troops. Those monkeys together surrounded (besieged) the city from all the sides. They were wildly jumping, skipping and hopping, madly shouting, yelling, shrieking and roaring; they were armed with trees and mountains (rocks, boulders etc.), and were ready with clenched fists (51-52).

रामो जयत्यतिबलो लक्ष्मणश्च महाबलः। राजा जयति सुग्रीवो राघवेणानुपालितः।। 53।।
इत्येवं घोषयन्तश्च समं युयुधिरेऽरिभिः। हनूमानङ्गदश्चैव कुमुदो नील एव च।। 54।।
नलश्च शरभश्चैव मैन्दो द्विविद एव च। जाम्बवान्दधिवक्त्रश्च केसरी तार एव च।। 55।।

rāmo jayatyatibalo lakṣmaṇaśca mahābalaḥ/
rājā jayati sugrīvo rāghaveṇānupālitaḥ//
ityevaṃ ghoṣayantaśca samaṃ yuyudhire'ribhiḥ/
hanūmānaṅgadaścaiva kumudo nīla eva ca//
nalaśca śarabhaścaiva maindo dvivida eva ca/
jāmbavāndadhivaktraśca kesarī tāra eva ca//

'Glory to the most valorous, valiant and mighty Sri Ram and Laxman! Glory to Sugriv who is protected by Raghav' (53). Raising such slogans in a thunderous, resounding voice, they clashed head on with the enemy. Hanuman, Angad, Kumud, Neel, Nal, Sharabh, Mainda, Dwivid, Jamvant, Dadhimukh, Keshari, Tar (54-55)—

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अन्ये च बलिनः सर्वे यूथपाश्च प्लवङ्गमाः। द्वाराण्युत्प्लुत्य लङ्कायाः सर्वतो रुरुधुर्भृशम्।
तदा वृक्षैर्महाकायाः पर्वताग्रैश्च वानराः।।56।।
निजघ्नुस्तानि रक्षांसि नखैर्दन्तैश्च वेगिताः। राक्षसाश्च तदा भीमा द्वारेभ्यः सर्वतो रुषा।।57।।
निर्गत्य भिन्दिपालैश्च खड्गैः शूलैः परश्वधैः। निजघ्नुर्वानरानीकं महाकाया महाबलाः।।58।।

anye ca balinaḥ sarve yūthapāśca plavaṅgamāḥ/
dvārāṇyutplutya laṅkāyāḥ sarvato rurudhurbhṛśam/
tadā vṛkṣairmahākāyāḥ parvatāgraiśca vānarāḥ//
nijaghnustāni rakṣāṃsi nakhairdantaiśca vegitāḥ/
rākṣasāśca tadā bhīmā dvārebhyaḥ sarvato ruṣā//
nirgatya bhindipālaiśca khaḍgaiḥ śūlaiḥ paraśvadhaiḥ/
nijaghnurvānarānīkaṃ mahākāyā mahābalāḥ//

—And other powerful and strong monkeys as well as army commanders jumped and bounced angrily and viciously as they surrounded (besieged) all the gates of Lanka from all the sides. Then holding large trees and rocks and boulders picked up from mountain sides, those monkeys (56) began to attack the demons very swiftly. They also used their teeth and nails in the assault on the demons. Then the most strong and powerful demons, who were very formidable and colossus in shape and size, emerged from all the gates of the city (like ants coming out from an anthill) and counter attacked the army of monkeys with 'Bhindipal' (a lancet like weapon which was thrown from a distance; a spike or spear or javelin), swords, tridents, battle axes etc. (57-58).

राक्षसांश्च तथा जघ्नुर्वानरा जितकाशिनः। तदा बभूव समरो मांसशोणितकर्दमः।। 59।।
रक्षसां वानराणां च सम्बभूवाद्भुतोपमः। ते हयैश्च गजैश्चैव रथैः काञ्चनसन्निभैः।।60।।
रक्षोव्याघ्रा युयुधिरे नादयन्तो दिशो दश। राक्षसाश्च कपीन्द्राश्च परस्परजयैषिणः।।61।।

rākṣasāṃśca tathā jaghnurvānarā jitakāśinaḥ/
tadā babhūva samaro māṃsaśoṇitakardamaḥ//
rakṣasāṃ vānarāṇāṃ ca sambabhūvādbhutopamaḥ/
te hayaiśca gajaiścaiva rathaiḥ kāñcanasannibhaiḥ//
rakṣovyāghrā yuyudhire nādayanto diśo daśa/
rākṣasāśca kapīndrāśca parasparajayaiṣiṇaḥ//

The victorious monkey warriors too began to hit back at the demons. At that time, a very fierce and spectacular battle erupted between the demons and the monkeys, as a result of which blood and flesh formed a mucky slush on the battle field.

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The brave lion-like demons rode horses, elephants and golden chariots. All the directions of the compass reverberated and echoed with their thunderous roars and shrieks (i.e. war cries). The demons and monkeys wanted to obtain victory over each other (59-61).

राक्षसान्वानरा जघ्नुर्वानरांश्चैव राक्षसाः। रामेण विष्णुना दृष्टा हरयो दिविजांशजाः।। 62।।
बभूवुर्बलिनो ह्यष्टास्तदा पीतामृता इव। सीताभिमर्शपापेन रावणेनाभिपालितान्।। 63।।
हतश्रीकान्हतबलान् राक्षसान् जघ्नुरोजसा। चतुर्थांशावशेषेण निहतं राक्षसं बलम्।। 64।।

rākṣasānvānarā jaghnurvānarāṃścaiva rākṣasāḥ।
rāmeṇa viṣṇunā dṛṣṭā harayo divijāṃśajāḥ॥
babhūvurbalino hṛṣṭāstadā pītāmṛtā iva।
sītābhimarśapāpena rāvaṇenābhipālitān॥
hataśrīkānhatabalān rākṣasān jaghnurojasā।
caturthāṃśāvaśeṣeṇa nihataṃ rākṣasaṃ balam॥

The monkeys and demons started hitting and killing each other viciously and mercilessly. The monkeys, who were born out of the genes of the various Gods, became very formidable, potentially awe inspiring and were especially empowered with might, valour, fierceness and invincibility when Sri Ram, who was Lord Vishnu himself, glanced at them benevolently with a cheerful countenance (to encourage them and egg them on). They appeared to gain renewed vigour as if they had drunk the immortal Amrit (the elixir of life), and began slaying the demon hordes who had lost their radiance, enthusiasm, zeal, strength and courage because they were nourished and sustained by Ravana, who had become most sinful because he had dared to touch Sita. Gradually, the demon army was reduced to a quarter of its original strength (on the very first day of fight) (62-64).

[Note :—It has been clearly stated earlier that Ravana did not touch Sita even while kidnapping her (see Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 51-52). So by saying that Ravana had 'touched' Sita and thereby have become most or very sinful is just a symbolic way of saying that he had dared to cast his evil and wicked eyes on her. 'Touch' here does not mean physical contact by the hand. It is a figure of speech indicating how he had even dared to think of her or keep her in his captivity or cast his evil eyes on her with malefic intentions, though he knew that she was no ordinary lady but the supreme Goddess herself.]

स्वसैन्यं निहतं दृष्ट्वा मेघनादोऽथ दुष्टधीः। ब्रह्मदत्तवरः श्रीमानन्तर्धानं गतोऽसुरः।। 65।।

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सर्वास्त्रकुशलो व्योम्नि ब्रह्मास्त्रेण समन्ततः। नानाविधानि शस्त्राणि वानरानीकमर्दयन्।।66।।
ववर्ष शरजालानि तदद्भुतमिवाभवत्। रामोऽपि मानयन्ब्राह्ममस्त्रमस्त्रविदां वरः।।67।।
क्षणं तूष्णीमुवासाथ ददर्श पतितं बलम्। वानराणां रघुश्रेष्ठश्चुकोपानलसन्निभः।।68।।

svasainya nihataṃ dṛṣṭvā meghanādo'tha duṣṭadhīḥ /
brahmadattavaraḥ śrīmānantardhānaṃ gato'suraḥ //
sarvāstrakuśalo vyomni brahmāstreṇa samantataḥ /
nānāvidhāni śastrāṇi vānarānīkamardayan //
vavarṣa śarajālāni tadadbhutamivābhavat /
rāmo'pi mānayanbrāhmastramastravidāṃ varaḥ //
kṣaṇaṃ tūṣṇīmuvāsātha dadarśa patitaṃ balam /
vānarāṇāṃ raghuśreṣṭhaścukopānalasannibhaḥ //

Seeing that the majority of his army had been slayed (or eliminated or decimated, or was in tatters), Meghnad (son of Ravana), who was excessively evil and pervert minded but was bolstered, empowered and encouraged on the strength of the boon granted to him by Lord Brahma, became invisible (i.e. vanished from sight from the battle field) (65). That demon was proficient in using all types of weapons and arms. So he climbed up in the sky, showered different types of arms, weapons and arrows from there, and began to pound the army of monkeys by his Brahmastra (a special weapon given to him by Lord Brahma). [He peppered the monkey army with numerous potent and magical weapons of various denominations, and literally sprayed them with those weapons and armaments.] It appeared to be a very astonishing sight (because Meghnad was not visible, and so the monkey commanders did not know whom to fight). Sri Ram, who is the best amongst experts in weapons and use of arms, watched the decline (ruin, destruction, decimation, fall, humiliation) of his forces silently for a moment just in order to maintain (uphold and show respect to) the sanctity of Brahma's weapons. At last, the best in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) became furious with anger like a re-kindled fire (66-68).

चापमानय सौमित्रे ब्रह्मास्त्रेणासुरं क्षणात्। भस्मीकरोमि मे पश्य बलमद्य रघूत्तम।।69।।
मेघनादोऽपि तच्छ्रुत्वा रामवाक्यमतन्द्रितः। तूर्णं जगाम नगरं मायया मायिकोऽसुरः।।70।।

cāpamānaya saumitre brahmāstreṇāsuraṃ kṣaṇāt /
bhasmīkaromi me paśya balamadya raghūttama //
meghanādo'pi tacchrutvā rāmavākyamatandritaḥ /
tūrṇaṃ jagāma nagaraṃ māyayā māyiko'suraḥ //

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He (Sri Ram) said, 'Oh the son of Sumitra (Laxman)! Bring my bow—I shall reduce to ashes in a moment this wicked demon with a Brahmastra. Oh the best in Raghu's clan (Laxman)! Watch the spectacular display of my might and strength today' (69).

Meghnad was very alert. Hearing these words of Sri Ram, that great maverick imposter and illusive demon, skilled in the art of deception, stealthily and imperceptibly went back to his city (i.e. he fled from the battle front) (70).

पतितं वानरानीकं दृष्ट्वा रामोऽतिदुःखितः। उवाच मारुतिं शीघ्रं गत्वा क्षीरमहोदधिम्।। 71।।
तत्र द्रोणगिरिर्नाम दिव्यौषधिसमुद्भवः। तमानय द्रुतं गत्वा सञ्जीवय महामते।। 72।।
वानरौघान्महासत्त्वान्कीर्तिस्ते सुस्थिरा भवेत्। आज्ञा प्रमाणमित्युक्त्वा जगामानिलनन्दनः।।73।।

patitaṃ vānarānīkaṃ dṛṣṭvā rāmo'tiduḥkhitaḥ /
uvāca mārutiṃ śīghraṃ gatvā kṣīramahodadhim //
tatra droṇagirirnāma divyauṣadhisamudbhavaḥ /
tamānaya drutaṃ gatvā sañjīvaya mahāmate //
vānaraughānmahāsattvānkīrtiste susthirā bhavet /
ājñā pramāṇamityuktvā jagāmānilanandanaḥ //

Seeing the ruin (devastation, decimation, trouncing) of the monkey army, Sri Ram was exceedingly sorry and remorseful. He said to Maruti (Hanuman) 'You go to the Kshir Sagar (literally, an celestial ocean of milk where Lord Vishnu resides in an inclined position on the Sheshnath) immediately (71). There is a mountain called Dronachal there. Different types of medicinal herbs grow on it. Oh the wise one! Go and quickly bring that mountain here (72) and revive these most brave and valorous monkey warriors back to life. This will make your fame and glory stable and world famous for all times to come'. Hearing this, the son of the Wind God said 'as you please', and started off for the mission (73).

[Note :—Sri Ram has given clear instructions to Hanuman to bring the Dronachal mountain to Lanka to revive the monkeys. This episode is in contrast to Tulsidas' version in Ram Charit Manas where the mountain was brought by Hanuman to revive Laxman, and not the other monkeys. Also, he brought it because he could not recognise the required herb, but here he has done it on specific instructions of Sri Ram.]

आनीय च गिरिं सर्वान्वानरान्वानरर्षभः। जीवयित्वा पुनस्तत्र स्थापयित्वाययौ द्रुतम्।। 74।।
पूर्ववद्भैरवं नादं वानराणां बलौघतः। श्रुत्वा विस्मयमापन्नो रावणो वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 75।।

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ānīya ca giriṃ sarvānvānarānvānararṣabhaḥ /
jīvayitvā punastatra sthāpayitvāyayau drutam //
pūrvavadbhairavaṃ nādaṃ vānarāṇāṃ balaughataḥ /
śrutvā vismayamāpanno rāvaṇo vākyamabravīt //

He brought that mountain, revived all the monkeys (by using its herbs), and immediately took it back to where it belonged (74).

Hearing the tremendous uproar of the monkeys once again, Ravana was utterly astonished and bewildered (because it was almost a miracle). He said (75)—

राघवो मे महान् शत्रुः प्राप्तो देवविनिर्मितः। हन्तुं तं समरे शीघ्रं गच्छन्तु मम यूथपाः।। 76।।
मन्त्रिणो बान्धवाः शूरा ये च मत्प्रियकाङ्क्षिणः। सर्वे गच्छन्त युद्धाय त्वरितं मम शासनात्।। 77।।

rāghavo me mahān śatruḥ prāpto devavinirmitaḥ /
hantuṃ taṃ samare śīghraṃ gacchantu mama yūthapāḥ //
mantriṇo bāndhavāḥ śūrā ye ca matpriyakāṅkṣiṇaḥ /
sarve gacchantu yuddhāya tvaritaṃ mama śāsanāt //

'Raghav (Sri Ram) is my great enemy. It appears that he has been created by the Gods (to get rid of me). My army and its commanders should proceed to kill him in the battle forthwith (76). All those who are my well-wishers—such as brave commanders of the army, ministers, kith and kins relatives and friends et al, should obey my orders and proceed immediately for the battle (77).

ये न गच्छन्ति युद्धाय भीरवः प्राणविप्लवात्। तान्हनिष्याम्यहं सर्वान्मच्छासनपराङ्मुखान्।। 78।।
तच्छ्रुत्वा भयसन्त्रस्ता निर्जग्मू रणकोविदाः। अतिकायः प्रहस्तश्च महानादमहोदरौ।। 79।।
देवशत्रुर्निकुम्भश्च देवान्तकनरान्तकौ। अपरे बलिनः सर्वे ययुर्युद्धाय वानरैः।।80।।

ye na gacchanti yuddhāya bhīravaḥ prāṇaviplavāt /
tānhaniṣyāmyahaṃ sarvānmacchāsanaparāṅmukhān //
tacchrutvā bhayasantrastā nirjagmū raṇakovidāḥ /
atikāyaḥ prahastaśca mahānādamahodarau //
devaśatrurnikumbhaśca devāntakanarāntakau /
apare balinaḥ sarve yayuryuddhāya vānaraiḥ //

Those cowards who do not go to battle fearing for their lives now—remember, I shall kill all those who do not obey my orders' (78).

Hearing these stern orders of Ravana and fearful of his wrath, the terrified expert warriors (i.e. those who were well versed in the art of

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warfare), who were very brave and strong—such as Atikai, Prahast, Mahanad, Mahodar, Devshatru, Nikumbh, Devantak, Narantak—all started for the battle field to fight the monkeys (79-80).

एते चान्ये च बहवः शूराः शतसहस्त्रशः। प्रविश्य वानरं सैन्यं ममन्थुर्बलदर्पिताः।। 81।।
भुशुण्डीभिन्दिपालैश्च बाणैः खड्गैः परश्वधैः। अन्यैश्च विविधैरस्त्रैर्निजघ्नुर्हरियूथपान्।।82।।

ete cānye ca bahavaḥ śūrāḥ śatasahasraśaḥ /
praviśya vānaraṃ sainyaṃ mamanthurbaladarpitāḥ //
bhuśuṇḍibhindipālaiśca bāṇaiḥ khaḍgaiḥ paraśvadhaiḥ /
anyaiśca vividhairastrairnijaghnurhariyūthapān //

Those above named demons as well as the numerous other hundreds of thousands of matchless brave and courageous warriors, who were intoxicated with the pride of their valour, strength, potent, bravery, punch and might, entered the throngs of monkeys and began thrashing and crushing them relentlessly and mercilessly (81).

They attacked the commanders of the monkey army with 'Bhushandi' (an ancient weapon of war), 'Bhindipal' (a spike like weapon thrown at the enemy) arrows, swords, battle axes and many other different varieties of weapons and arms of war (82).

ते पादपैः पर्वताग्रैर्नखदंष्ट्रैश्च मुष्टिभिः। प्राणैर्विमोचयामासुः सर्वराक्षसयूथपान्।। 83।।
रामेण निहताः केचित्सुग्रीवेण तथापरे। हनूमता चाङ्गदेन लक्ष्मणेन महात्मना।
यूथपैर्वानराणां ते निहताः सर्वराक्षसाः।। 84।।
रामतेजः समाविश्य वानरा बलिनोऽभवन्। रामशक्तिविहीनानामेवं शक्तिः कुतो भवेत्।।85।।

te pādapaiḥ parvatāgrairnakhadaṃṣṭraiśca muṣṭibhiḥ /
prāṇairvimocayāmāsuḥ sarvarākṣasayūthapān //
rāmeṇa nihatāḥ kecitsugrīveṇa tathāpare /
hanūmatā cāṅgadena lakṣmaṇena mahātmanā /
yūthapairvānarāṇāṃ te nihatāḥ sarvarākṣasāḥ //
rāmatejaḥ samāviśya vānarā balino'bhavan /
rāmaśaktivihīnānāmevaṃ śaktiḥ kuto bhavet //

Here meanwhile, the brave monkey warriors used trees, rocks and boulders uprooted from mountains (to hammer at and crush to pulp the demons), their own nails, jaws (to tear at, bite and shear off the flesh from the demons), and clenched fists (which was used to punch and pound at the demons) so as to render all the commanders and the army of demons dazed and lifeless. [It was obviously a closely fought, one-to-one battle.] (83).

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Out of those demons, some were killed at the hands of Sri Ram, some by Sugriv, others respectively by Hanuman, Angad, the great Laxman and various other brave monkey warriors. In this manner, all those demons were killed (84).

Since the divine cosmic energy (or force) of Sri Ram had injected and infused the monkeys with invincibility and great ferocity, they were endowed with and had acquired immense force, punch, might, valour, prowess and potent in the battle field. How could they be so potent, effective, able, strong, competent and proficient as well as invincible and robust without the infusion of Sri Ram's own divine strength and powers into them? (85).

[Note :—Eight among the chief commanders of the demon army as listed in verse nos. 79-80 died in this battle which was joined by Sri Ram and Laxman themselves as is clear from verse no. 84.]

सर्वेश्वरः सर्वमयो विधाता मायामनुष्यत्वविडम्बनेन।
सदा चिदानन्दमयोऽपि रामो युद्धादिलीलां वितनोति मायाम्।। 86।।

sarveśvaraḥ sarvamayo vidhātā māyāmanuṣyatvaviḍambanena /
sadā cidānandamayo'pi rāmo yuddhādilīlāṃ vitanoti māyām //

Sri Ram is the Lord of all creation, is all encompassing and is encompassed by all, is all pervading and omnipresent, is the controller of and the one who determines the destiny and fate of all, and is truthfully and eternally blissful, peaceful and tranquil. Inspite of that, he follows the behaviour of an ordinary human being because he has assumed that body by his illusion creating powers called Maya (and that is why he shows anger and vehemence in the battle field, though all—both the demons and the monkeys—are same to him!). It is such a wonder that he spreads his playful and charming activities to the battle field, and fights this illusive and deceptive battle. (86).

[Note—If Sri Ram wants, he can finish off the entire demon army by batting an eyelid, by simply blinking, as it were. But he wishes not to do so for the purpose of creating a legendary story which his devotees will sing and narrate for all times to come. Such stories are called 'Kathas and Leelas' of the Lord which he had performed for the benefit of his devotees.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 6

Laxman's fainting; The Ram-Ravana battle;
Hanuman goes to bring the herb to revive Laxman;
Ravana-Kalnemi conversation

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

श्रुत्वा युद्धे बलं नष्टमतिकायमुखं महत्। रावणो दुःखसन्तप्तः क्रोधेन महतावृतः।। 1।।
निधायेन्द्रजितं लङ्कारक्षणार्थं महाद्युतिः। स्वयं जगाम युद्धाय रामेण सह राक्षसः।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

śrutvā yuddhe balaṃ naṣṭamatikāyamukhaṃ mahat /
rāvaṇo duḥkhasantaptaḥ krodhena mahatāvṛtaḥ //
nidhāyendrajitaṃ laṅkārakṣaṇārthaṃ mahādyutiḥ /
svayaṃ jagāma yuddhāya rāmeṇa saha rākṣasaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing that the large army led by Atikai etc. has been completely devastated in the battle, Ravana was dismayed and overcome with extreme remorse and gloom. He was greatly agitated with anger, wrath and vengeance (1).

That most energetic, agile and valiant demon appointed Indrajeet (Meghnad) to take care of the internal security and protection of the city of Lanka, and himself set off, along with other demons, to fight with Sri Ram (2).

दिव्यं स्यन्दनमारुह्य सर्वशस्त्रास्त्रसंयुतम्। राममेवाभिदुद्राव राक्षसेन्द्रो महाबलः।। 3।।
वानरान्बहुशो हत्वा बाणैराशीविषोपमैः। पातयामास सुग्रीवप्रमुखान्यूथनायकान्।। 4।।

divyaṃ syandanamāruhya sarvaśastrāstrasaṃyutam /
rāmamevābhidudrāva rākṣasendro mahābalaḥ //
vānarānbahuśo hatvā bāṇairāśīviṣopamaiḥ /
pātayāmāsa sugrīvopramukhānyūthanāyakān //

Riding on a majestic and magnificent chariot and armed to the teeth with all the best of his arms, armaments and weapons of war that most strong and valorous king of demons (Ravana) charged towards Sri Ram (3). Killing a number of monkeys with his deadly arrows which were as poisonous as serpents (i.e. they were poison-tipped and fierce), he fell Sugriv and other chief commanders, making them unconscious with his volley of arrows (4).

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गदापाणिं महासत्त्वं तत्र दृष्ट्वा विभीषणम्। उत्ससर्ज महाशक्तिं मयदत्तां विभीषणे।। 5।।
तामापतन्तीमालोक्य विभीषण विघातिनीम्। दत्ताभयोऽयं रामेण वधार्हो नायमासुरः।।6।।
इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणो भीमं चापमादाय वीर्यवान्। विभीषणस्य पुरतः स्थितोऽकम्प इवाचलः।।7।।

gadāpāṇiṃ mahāsattvaṃ tatra dṛṣṭvā vibhīṣaṇam /
utsasarja mahāśaktiṃ mayadattāṃ vibhīṣaṇe //
tāmāpatantīmālokya vibhīṣaṇa vighātinīm /
dattābhayo'yaṃ rāmeṇa vadhārho nāyamāsuraḥ //
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇo bhīmaṃ cāpamādāya vīryavān /
vibhīṣaṇasya puratah sthito'kampa ivācalaḥ //

Seeing the most valiant and valorous Vibhishan standing in his path with his mace, he (Ravana) shot at him the great and potential weapon called 'Mahashkti' given to him by Maidanav (5). Seeing that fierce weapon approaching Vibhishan to kill him, Laxman thought that 'This prince of demons has been blessed with fearlessness by Sri Ram; hence he must not be allowed to die or be harmed at any cost' (6). The most manly, valiant, valorous and strong Laxman took his formidably fierce and most potent bow and stood sturdily like an immobile mountain in front of Vibhishan, separating him from Ravana (i.e. he stood like a unconquerable barrier between Ravana and Vibhishan) (7).

सा शक्तिर्लक्ष्मणतनुं विवेशामोघशक्तितः।
यावन्त्यः शक्तयो लोके मायायाः सम्भवन्ति हि।।8।।
तासामाधारभूतस्य लक्ष्मणस्य महात्मनः। मायाशक्त्या भवेत्किं वा शेषांशस्य हरेस्तनोः।।9।।

sā śaktirlakṣmaṇatanuṃ viveśāmoghaśaktitaḥ /
yāvantyaḥ śaktayo loke māyāyāḥ sambhavanti hi //
tāsāmādhārabhūtasya lakṣmaṇasya mahātmanaḥ /
māyāśaktyā bhavetkiṁ vā śeṣāṃśasya harestanoḥ //

That specially charged (energised) weapon shot by Ravana at Vibhishan was infallible, so it entered the body of Laxman. All the magically empowered and specially charged potential weapons of war that can ever be created or produced by Maya (the stupendous energy and the deception creating powers of the supreme Lord of the cosmos; in modern terms, different types of state-of-the-art, technically advanced weapons of war, including chemical, biological and nuclear-tipped ones) in this world, Lord Hari (Vishnu) is the basic source of their origin, existence, strength, potential powers and effects; he is

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the one who empowers them and is their controller and regulator. Laxman—who is an incarnation of a fraction of Sheshnath's genes—is nothing but an image of a fraction or part of the same Lord Hari. How then can that Maya-shakti (energised weapon created by the use of magical powers) ever harm him? (8-9).

[Note :—Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas differs in this vital fact. According to Tulsidas, it was Sri Ram who had taken the hit rather than Laxman as is described here. Refer footnote to verse nos. 10-13 below.]

तथापि मानुषं भावमापन्नस्तदनुव्रतः। मूर्च्छितः पतितो भूमौ तमादातुं दशाननः॥ 10॥
हस्तैस्तोलयितुं शक्तो न बभूवातिविस्मितः। सर्वस्य जगतः सारं विराजं परमेश्वरम्॥ 11॥
कथं लोकाश्रयं विष्णुं तोलयेल्लघुराक्षसः। ग्रहीतुकामं सौमित्रिं रावणं वीक्ष्य मारुतिः॥ 12॥
आजघानोरसि क्रुद्धो वज्राकल्पेन मुष्टिना। तेन मुष्टिप्रहारेण जानुभ्यामपतद्भुवि॥ 13॥

tathāpi mānuṣaṃ bhāvamāpannastadanuvrataḥ /
mūrcchitaḥ patito bhūmau tamādātuṃ daśānanaḥ //
hastaistolayituṃ śakto na babhūvātivismitaḥ /
sarvasya jagataḥ sāraṃ virājaṃ parameśvaram //
kathaṃ lokāśrayaṃ viṣṇuṃ tolayellaghurākṣasaḥ /
grahītukāmaṃ saumitriṃ rāvaṇaṃ vīkṣya mārutiḥ //
ājaghānorasi kruddho vajrakalpena muṣṭinā /
tena muṣṭiprahāreṇa jānubhyāmapatadbhuviḥ //

Still, since he was in the form of a human, he behaved accordingly, and becoming unconscious (due to the effect of the Shakti shot by Ravana), he collapsed on the ground. In order to take him away, Ravana (10) tried to lift him up by his hands, but was unsuccessful in doing so. So he was very astonished. Indeed, how could a lowly and humble demon lift him who is the essence or the basic cause of the entire creation, who is the supreme Lord of the cosmos, called the Viraat Purush (the macrocosmic gross body of the supreme Brahm from whom the rest of the creation manifested) (11), who is the shelter, support and succour of this whole world/creation, and who is called Lord Vishnu[1].

When Hanuman (Maruti) observed that Ravana wants to take Laxman, the son of Sumitra, away from the battle field (12), he became very angry and hit him in the chest with clenched fists with Vajra-like ferocity. [The Vajra is the weapon of Indra; commonly called thunderbolt; it is said to be the most strong and invincible weapon

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that ever existed]. Due to the impact of that fierce punch, Ravana swooned and tottered and fell to the ground on his knees (13).

[Note :—(1) We must note that the author Veda Vyas seems to suddenly switch from Laxman to Sri Ram by using all the adjectives, qualities, epithets and virtues used to describe Lord Vishnu. This is because of the fact that the author, Veda Vyas, sees no distinction between Sri Ram and Laxman as is evident in the previous verse no.9. In fact, even in Vedantic concept, it is clearly stated in Ram Uttar Taponishad that out of the three letters of the ethereal, holy and divine word OM which consists of three letters A, U, M, Laxman was the manifestation of the letter A of the word OM. "अकारक्षरसम्भूत: सौमित्रि-र्विश्वभावन:". This is the subtle hint that Tulsidas relied upon when he mentioned Sri Ram intervening to protect Vibhishan in Ram Charit Manas, Lanka Kand, Doha nos. 93-94, Chaupai nos. 1-3. Further, verse no. 17 below also proves that Laxman was a part/fraction of Lord Vishnu or Narayan himself.

(2) There is another interpretation of Ravana's inability to pick up Laxman. He is an incarnation of the legendary celestial serpent called Sheshnath on whose coiled body Lord Vishnu reclines in the cosmic ocean called Kshir Sagar, literally meaning the ocean of milk. Lord Vishnu represents the entire universe, as the latter is but a manifestation of the Lord and the Lord embodies the entire universe in his form. Since Sheshnath holds the universe, albeit in the form of Vishnu reclining on its coiled body, lifting Laxman would have been tantamount to lifting the whole universe, a feat that is impossible because Lanka and the ground on which it stood was also a part of that universe, and a person cannot lift the ground from underneath his own feet on which he is standing! Its physically and practically impossible.]

आस्यैश्च नेत्रश्रवणैरुद्वमन् रुधिरं बहु। विघूर्णमाननयनो रथोपस्थ उपाविशत्।। 14।।
अथ लक्ष्मणमादाय हनूमान् रावणार्दितम्। आनयद्रामसामीप्यं बाहुभ्यां परिगृह्य तम्।। 15।।
हनूमतः सुहृत्त्वेन भक्त्या च परमेश्वरः। लघुत्वमगमद्देवो गुरूणां गुरुरप्यजः।। 16।।

āsyaśca netraśravaṇaiarudvaman rudhiraṃ bahu /
vighūrṇamānanayano rathopasya upāviśat //
atha lakṣmaṇamādāya hanūmān rāvaṇārditam /
ānayadrāmasamīpyaṃ bāhubhyāṃ parigṛhya tam //
hanūmataḥ suhṛttvena bhaktyā ca parameśvaraḥ /
laghutvamagamaddevo gurūṇāṃ gururapyajaḥ //

A lot of blood sprang out from his (Ravana's) mouth, eyes and ears; he swooned and tottered with the world before his eyes going

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round and round in circles, and he somehow managed to lift himself to the rear of his chariot (14). Thereafter, Hanuman lifted Laxman in his arms and brought him to where Sri Ram was (15). For the sake of Hanuman, the Lord who is without a birth and is an embodiment of light of wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment, became very light so as to be allowed to be lifted easily, though he is the heaviest of the heavy elements. This was done in deference to Hanuman's friendship, endearment, affection and brotherliness as well as for his natural devotion, dedication and submission for the supreme Lord (16).

[Note—There are two contrasting situations here. The same Laxman could not be lifted by Ravana, while Hanuman could do that very easily. All logics and arguments that can be applied to explain why Ravana could not lift Laxman fail when they are applied on Hanuman's feat. The question arises why? The reason is Hanuman is a manifestation of the wind or air element. The wind element forms the vital wind that sustains life in a creature as its Pran. The Pran is of five main types depending upon the functions that it carries. One of them is called 'Udaan', and its main function is to lift the body from a lying position. It is located in the hands, legs and the joints of the body. The other chief vital wind, amongst the five, is called the Pran which is synonymous with breath. Breath is that wind which infuses life in the otherwise inane and dead body, and its location is in the nose, mouth and the heart. Here it helped Hanuman in gathering sufficient strength to lift the body of Laxman. The next wind is called Saman which helps in equal distribution of nourishment in the body, but here we can assume that it helps in equal distrib . of the weight of the body and helped Hanuman to easily lift the body of Laxman as if it was of the same weight as the surrounding air. The Apaan wind helps in excretion and here that wind helped to eliminate the toxic effects of the poisoned arrow from the body of Laxman. The Vyan wind helped the Udaan wind in lifting the body of Laxman because it resides in the thighs, waist, heals and shoulders.

In short, the wind element, under the instructions of the supreme commander Lord Ram, simply performed its duties, albeit in the form of Hanuman, to help Laxman's body rise here, and to be revived later on when the herb was administered to him. Perhaps this also explains why Hanuman could lift the entire mountain and bring it all the way to Lanka, because on this 'lifting' ability of the Udaan wind.

This incident highlights the fact that no one is able to do anything on his own account without the Lord wanting it to be done by him. Hanuman was able to lift Laxman because the Lord wanted it to be so, while Ravana failed because the Lord hadn't wanted it to be so. No one whosoever can

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defy his wishes. Even the all-powerful Maya that is so powerful that it holds even the Gods under its spell, is afraid of the Lord and follows his commands. If we extend the logic further, we would realise that the war that was seemingly fought by the demons and the monkeys was nothing but the Lord's own puppet show, wherein he also acted some part as the main hero. Nevertheless, this is where the Maya comes into play; despite knowing everything, we say that the demons and the monkeys had fought a fierce war in which the demons were defeated and the monkeys won. Nothing doing; it was the Lord who weaved this web of deception so that his devotees would have a chance to sing and narrate his glories and redeem themselves in the process by having Bhakti in him. The Lord wished to preach the profound tenets of the Vedas and the Upanishads to humankind, he wished to set an exemplary and stellar example for man to emulate in his daily life in order to lead an honourable and righteous life, and set himself free from the interminable cycle of horrifying sins and perversions that make a demon out of a man, as it were.]

सा शक्तिरपि तं त्यक्त्वा ज्ञात्वा नारायणांशजम्। रावणस्य रथं प्रागाद्रावणोऽपि शनैस्ततः।। 17।।
संज्ञामवाप्य जग्राह बाणासनमथो रुषा। राममेवाभिदुद्राव दृष्ट्वा रामोऽपि तं क्रुधा।। 18।।
आरुह्य जगतां नाथो हनूमन्तं महाबलम्। रथस्थं रावणं दृष्ट्वा अभिदुद्राव राघवः।। 19।।

sā śaktirapi taṃ tyaktvā jñātvā nārāyaṇāṃśajam/
rāvaṇasya rathaṃ prāgādrāvaṇo'pi śanaistataḥ//
saṃjñāmavāpya jagrāha bāṇāsanamatho ruṣā/
rāmamevābhidudrāva dṛṣṭvā rāmo'pi taṃ krudhā//
āruhya jagatāṃ nātho hanūmantaṃ mahābalam/
rathasthaṃ rāvaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā abhidudrāva rāghavaḥ//

Realising (or recognising) that he (Laxman) was but a part or a fraction of Lord Narayan himself, that powerful weapon called Shakti bounced off him (literally, left him alone) and went back to Ravana's chariot.

There, Ravana too gradually regained consciousness (17). He became very angry and taking his bow, he rushed towards Sri Ram menacingly once again. Seeing him coming in his direction, Sri Ram became extremely wrathful (18).

The Lord of the world (Sri Ram) climbed on the shoulders of the most valiant and valorous Hanuman, and seeing Ravana astride on his chariot, he rushed towards him (19).

[Note :—Sri Ram has mounted on the shoulders of Hanuman on earlier occasions also—when he was taken to meet Sugriv (Kishkindha Kand,

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Canto 1, verse nos. 27-28), also when the monkey army made its departure for Lanka (Lanka Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 31), and while inspecting Lanka (Lanka Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 9).]

ज्याशब्दमकरोत्तीव्रं वज्रानिष्पेषनिष्ठुरम्। रामो गम्भीरया वाचा राक्षसेन्द्रमुवाच ह।। 20।।
राक्षसाधम तिष्ठाद्य क्व गमिष्यसि मे पुरः। कृत्वापराधमेवं मे सर्वत्र समदर्शिनः।। 21।।
येन बाणेन निहता राक्षसास्ते जनालये। तेनैव त्वां हनिष्यामि तिष्ठाद्य मम गोचरे।। 22।।

jyāśabdamakarottīvraṃ vajraniṣpeṣaniṣṭhuram /
rāmo gambhīrayā vācā rākṣasendrāmuvāca ha //
rākṣasādhama tiṣṭhādya kva gamiṣyasi me puraḥ /
kṛtvāparādhamevaṃ me sarvatra samadarśinaḥ //
yena bāṇena nihatā rākṣasāste janālaye /
tenaiva tvāṃ haniṣyāmi tiṣṭhādya mama gocare //

Sri Ram strung the string of his bow which made such a formidable and loud twang that it could demolish to rubble (i.e. break into splinters) even the most strong Vajra (the sturdy and strong weapon of Indra, said to be toughest of all existing materials) by the energy of its sound waves.

Then Sri Ram addressed Ravana in a very grave and serious voice (20)—'Oh you evil, pervert, lowly and wicked demon! Though I am even minded, equitable and equanimous towards all and treat all the creatures alike, but still you have offended me unnecessarily, and how dare you wish to escape from me now. Stop (or wait) a while (21). Oh! I shall kill you using the arrow which I had used to slay your other demons (e.g. Khar, Dushan etc.) in the inhabited areas earlier (i.e. those areas which were inhabited by sages, hermits, ascetics etc.). Keep on standing before my eyes and do not run away' (22).

श्रीरामस्य वचः श्रुत्वा रावणो मारुतात्मजम्। वहन्तं राघवं सङ्ख्ये शरैस्तीक्ष्णैरताडयत्।। 23।।
हतस्यापि शरैस्तीक्ष्णैर्वायुसूनोः स्वतेजसा। व्यवर्धत पुनस्तेजो ननर्द च महाकपिः।। 24।।

śrīrāmasya vacaḥ śrutvā rāvaṇo mārutātmajam /
vahantaṃ rāghavaṃ saṅkhye śaraistīkṣṇairatāḍayat //
hatasyāpi śaraistīkṣṇairvāyusūnoḥ svatejasā /
vyavardhata punastejo nanarda ca mahākapiḥ //

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Ravana shot very sharp, fierce and potentially effective arrows at the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) who was presently the mount of Raghav (Sri Ram) (so as to disable

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him) (23), but inspite of being hit by those violent arrows, the son of the Wind God's strength and valour went on progressively increasing and that great monkey roared loudly and fiercely with renewed vigour (24).

ततो दृष्ट्वा हनूमन्तं सव्रणं रघुसत्तमः। क्रोधमाहारयामास कालरुद्र इवापरः।। 25।।
साश्वं रथं ध्वजं सूतं शस्त्रौघं धनुरञ्जसा। छत्रं पताकां तरसा चिच्छेद शितसायकैः।। 26।।

tato dṛṣṭvā hanūmantaṃ savraṇaṃ raghusattamaḥ /
krodhamāhārayāmāsa kālarudra ivāparaḥ //
sāśvaṃ rathaṃ dhvajaṃ sūtaṃ śasraughaṃ dhanurañjasā /
chatraṃ patākāṃ tarasā ciccheda śitasāyakaiḥ //

When the most superior of the Raghus (Sri Ram) saw that Hanuman has been injured and wounded, he became extremely angry and ferocious as if he were a personification of a second 'Kaal Rudra' (the form of Shiva which is regarded as a manifestation of death, destruction, wrath, vengeance and retribution) (25). He swiftly used a shower of his own acutely potent and sharp arrows to easily slice through, spike, smash and shred to pieces Ravana's chariot, flags, all his arms and weapons, his bow, ceremonial umbrellas (parasols), insignia, war standards etc., and kill his horses and his charioteer (26).

ततो महाशरेणाशु रावणं रघुसत्तमः। विव्याध वज्रकल्पेन पाकारिरिव पर्वतम्।। 27।।
रामबाणहतो वीरश्चचाल च मुमोह च। हस्तान्निपतितश्चापास्तं समीक्ष्य रघूत्तमः।। 28।।
अर्धचन्द्रेण चिच्छेद तत्किरीटं रविप्रभम्। अनुजानामि गच्छ त्वमिदानीं बाणपीडितः।। 29।।

tato mahāśareṇāśu rāvaṇaṃ raghusattamaḥ /
vivyādha vajrakalpena pākāririva parvatam //
rāmabāṇahato vīraścacāla ca mumoha ca /
hastānnipatitaścāpastaṃ samīkṣya raghūttamaḥ //
ardhacandreṇa ciccheda tatkirīṭaṃ raviprabham /
anujānāmi gaccha tvamidānīṃ bāṇapīḍitaḥ //

Thereafter, the best amongst the Raghus (Sri Ram) pierced through the body of Ravana with his great and powerful arrow which resembled (i.e. it was equivalent in strength and effect to) the Vajra which Indra (the king of Gods) had used to attack the mountains (to crush them) (27). Being hit and seriously injured by the formidable arrow of Sri Ram, that brave warrior (Ravana) lost his bearings,

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swooned and became unconscious; his bow fell down from his hands in front of Sri Ram who was the best in Raghu's clan (28). Then he (Sri Ram) smashed his crown, which was as splendorous and dazzling as the sun, with an arrow that had a sickle shaped (semi circular, crescent moon like) top. Then Sri Ram said, 'Oh Ravana! You are wounded and extremely tormented upon being injured by my arrows. Hence, I order you to go away form here for the time being (29).

[Note :—The reader must note the ethics and moral codes that were followed in those ancient time even during the war. Sri Ram could have easily killed Ravana when he lay wounded on the ground with his chariot, horses, arms and armaments all destroyed by Sri Ram, as is clear in verse no. 26. At that moment, Sri Ram's job was very easy. But no, he did not kill a fallen enemy. This is a stellar, a very good and exemplary example of high and ethical standards followed during warfare in earlier times. In today's world and with some other enemy, Ravana would have had it then and there!]

प्रविश्य लङ्कामाश्वास्य श्वः पश्यसि बलं मम। रामबाणेन संविद्धो हतदर्पोऽथ रावणः।। 30।।
महत्या लज्जया युक्तो लङ्कां प्राविशदातुरः। रामोऽपि लक्ष्मणं दृष्ट्वा मूर्च्छितं पतितं भुवि।।31।।

praviśya laṅkāmāśvāsya svaḥ paśyasi balaṃ mama /
rāmabāṇena saṃviddho hatadarpo'tha rāvaṇaḥ //
mahatyā lajjayā yukto laṅkāṃ prāviśadāturaḥ /
rāmo'pi lakṣmaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā mūrcchitaṃ patitaṃ bhuvi //

You go and take rest in Lanka today, then see my might and valour tomorrow (when you come to face me)'. Then being severely incapacitated and horribly wounded, and having his pride, ego, haughtiness and arrogance crushed to rubble, Ravana (30) returned shyly and meekly to Lanka full of gloom, shame and regrets. Meanwhile, Sri Ram saw Laxman lying unconscious on the ground (31).

[Note :—Refer to verse nos. 8-10 above.]

मानुषत्वमुपाश्रित्य लीलयानुशुशोच ह। ततः प्राह हनूमन्तं वत्स जीवय लक्ष्मणम्।। 32।।
महौषधीः समानीय पूर्ववद्वानरानपि। तथेति राघवेणोक्तो जगामाशु महाकपिः।। 33।।
हनूमान्वायुवेगेन क्षणात्तीर्त्वा महोदधिम्। एतस्मिन्नन्तरे चारा रावणाय न्यवेदयन्।। 34।।

mānuṣatvamupāśritya līlayānuśuśoca ha /
tataḥ prāha hanūmantaṃ vatsa jīvaya lakṣmaṇam //
mahauṣadhīḥ samānīya pūrvavadvānarānapi /
tatheti raghaveṇokto jagāmāśu mahākapiḥ //

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hanūmānvāyuvegena kṣaṇāttīrtvā mahodadhim /
etasminnantare cārā rāvaṇāya nyavedayan //

He (Sri Ram) began grieving like an ordinary emotional human under the influence of delusions and said to Hanuman, 'Oh son! As you had done earlier, bring the great herb (which has great rejuvenating properties) and revive Laxman and all other monkeys'. [Refer to Canto 5, verse nos. 72-73.] When Raghav (Sri Ram) had said so, the great monkey (33), Hanuman, said 'alright' and started off swiftly on the mission with the speed of wind (that howling wind that helps the clouds sweeps across the plains and mountains during a swiftly moving thunderstorm with a gale force wind, which does not bother about any resistance from any obstructions from the ground such as mountains, forests, valleys, ocean etc.) and crossed the great ocean in a fraction of a moment. Just about that time, the spies of Ravana submitted before him (34)—

[Note—There are some points worth noting here. Why did Lord Ram advise Hanuman to uproot the entire mountain for the herb instead of just bringing the required herb, especially when someone carrying such a huge structure across the sky would be a sitting duck for enemy missiles, as it were? Was Sri Ram not sure that Hanuman would be able to recognise the correct herb and bring the right thing. This argument does not hold water in the context of the fact that Hanuman was the wisest member of the Lord's team and most learned, a fact borne by Sri Ram's own observation in Kishkindha Kand, canto 1, verse no.17-18. Further, Hanuman had been taught by the Sun God who is a symbol of wisdom and erudition of the highest order because he is the fount of light that lights up the rest of the creation, and light is a metaphor for knowledge and wisdom.

The answer is this—the herbs had to be administered raw, plucked directly from their roots in the soil where they grew, and given to the patient within a given time frame after which their efficacy and effects would wane and fade away, or they could be even harmful as is the case with modern medicines which have expired. That would have been fatal. Besides this consideration, it was not certain how much quantity would be actually needed to be administered to revive Laxman and other wounded monkeys. In times of war, risk taking is not advisable at all. So the Lord instructed Hanuman to bring the whole stock of herbs and the ground where they grew, which incidentally happened to be a mountain.

The next question is why did the Lord select Hanuman for the job? The answer is obvious—the Lord was well aware of his potentials. Hanuman has proved his mettle by leaping across the 800 mile wide ocean and

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then coming back unscathed, overcoming all horrible obstructions with ease and aplomb. Amongst the Lord's flock, he was the most competent and had the grit and aptitude for such special errands.]

रामेण प्रेषितो देव हनूमान् क्षीरसागरम्। गतो नेतुं लक्ष्मणस्य जीवनार्थं महौषधीः।। 35।।
श्रुत्वा तच्चारवचनं राजा चिन्तापरोऽभवत्। जगाम रात्रावेकाकी कालनेमिगृहं क्षणात्।।36।।

rāmeṇa preṣito deva hanūmān kṣīrasāgaram /
gato netuṃ lakṣmaṇasya jīvanārthaṃ mahauṣadhīḥ //
śrutvā taccāravacanaṃ rājā cintāparo'bhavat /
jagāma rātrāvekākī kālanemigṛhaṃ kṣaṇāt //

'Oh Lord! Sri Ram has sent Hanuman to the 'Kshir Sagar' (the legendary ocean of milk), and he has gone there with the errand to bring the great herb to revive Laxman' (35).

Hearing their report, the king (Ravana) became alarmed and very worried. He instantly, right at that odd hour during the night, went alone to the house of Kalnemi (36).

[Note :—When Hanuman flew through the night sky, he appeared like a comet or a meteor streaking through the canopy of the sky, from one point of the horizon to the other. This aspect has been highlighted by Tulsidas in his classic book called Kavitawali, in its Lanka Kand, verse no. 54. An English version of the text by the author has been published separately.]

गृहागतं समालोक्य रावणं विस्मयान्वितः। कालनेमिरुवाचेदं प्राञ्जलिर्भयविह्वल।
अर्घ्यादिकं ततः कृत्वा रावणस्याग्रतः स्थितः।। 37।।
किं ते करोमि राजेन्द्र किमागमनकारणम्। कालनेमिमुवाचेदं रावणो दुःखपीडितः।।38।।

gṛhāgataṃ samālokya rāvaṇaṃ vismayānvitaḥ /
kālanemiruvācedaṃ prāñjalirbhayavihvalaḥ /
arghyādikaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā rāvaṇasyāgrataḥ sthitaḥ //
kiṃ te karomi rājendra kimāgamanakāraṇam /
kālanemimuvācedaṃ rāvaṇo duḥkhapīḍitaḥ //

Seeing Ravana come home to visit him at that odd hour of the night, Kalnemi was surprised and perplexed (and wandered at the probable reasons for his arrival). He showed respect to him by offering water to clean his feet and stood before him most terrified with palms joined together in submission. He said (37), 'Oh King of kings! With what purpose have you come here today? Say what can I do for you (or how can I serve you)?'

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Then Ravana somberly said to Kalnemi with gloom and sadness in his heart, but with a voice of urgency (38)—

ममापि कालवशतः कष्टमेतदुपस्थितम्। मया शक्त्या हतो वीरो लक्ष्मणः पतितो भुवि।। 39।।
तं जीवयितुमानेतुमोषधीर्हनुमान् गतः। यथा तस्य भवेद्विघ्नस्तथा कुरु महामते।। 40।।
मायया मुनिवेषेण मोहयस्व महाकपिम्। कालात्ययो यथा भूयात्तथा कृत्वैहि मन्दिरे।। 41।।

mamāpi kālavaśataḥ kaṣṭametadupasthitam /
mayā śaktyā hato vīro lakṣmaṇaḥ patito bhuvi //
taṃ jīvayitumānetumoṣadhīrhanumān gataḥ /
yathā tasya bhavedvighnastathā kuru mahāmate //
māyayā muniveṣeṇa mohayasva mahākapim /
kālātyayo yathā bhūyāttathā kṛtvaihi mandire //

'Due to certain unfavourable circumstances and bad times, I too am made to suffer from distress and despair today, though I had thought that I was immune from them. The brave Laxman is lying on the ground after being hit and getting injured by my Shakti (specially empowered and energised weapon) (39). Hanuman has gone to fetch medicine to revive him. Oh the great one (Kalnemi)! You should do something that creates an obstacle/hindrance in Hanuman's way (40). You should assume a form of a hermit using your powers of deception and try to lead the great monkey astray so that the time-slot for using the medicinal herb expires. After that, you can return home' (41).

[Note :—The herb was to be administered before dawn, after which it would be rendered ineffective.]

रावणस्य वचः श्रुत्वा कालनेमिरुवाच तम्। रावणेश वचो मेऽद्य शृणु धारय तत्त्वतः।। 42।।
प्रियं ते करवाण्येव न प्राणान् धारयाम्यहम्। मारीचस्य यथारण्ये पुराभून्मृगरूपिणः।। 43।।
तथैव मे न सन्देहो भविष्यति दशानन। हताः पुत्राश्च पौत्राश्च बान्धवा राक्षसाश्च ते।। 44।।

rāvaṇasya vacaḥ śrutvā kālanemiruvāca tam /
rāvaṇeśa vaco me'dya śṛṇu dhāraya tattvataḥ //
priyaṃ te karavāṇyeva na prāṇān dhārayāmyaham /
mārīcasya yathāraṇye purābhūnmṛgarūpiṇaḥ //
tathaiva me na sandeho bhaviṣyati daśānana /
hatāḥ putrāśca pautrāśca bāndhavā rākṣasāśca te //

Hearing these words of Ravana, Kalnemi said to him, 'Oh Lord Ravana! Listen to what I have to say to you and accept it as the truth and a prudent advice (42). I will do whatever is good for you, and for

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doing that I do not care for my own life. [But, say, what is the use or benefit of doing what you wish me to do?] Whatever had happened to Marich in the form of the decoy deer in the Dandakaranya forest earlier (43) would also be my fate. Oh the 10-headed one, there is no doubt about it happening. A number of your sons, grandsons and many kith and kin as well as compatriot demons have already been killed (44).

घातयित्वासुरकुलं जीवितेनापि किं तव। राज्येन वा सीतया वा किं देहेन जडात्मना।। 45।।
सीतां प्रयच्छ रामाय राज्यं देहि विभीषणे। वनं याहि महाबाहो रम्यं मुनिगणाश्रयम्।। 46।।

ghātayitvāsurakulaṃ jīvitenāpi kiṃ tava /
rājyena vā sītayā vā kiṃ dehena jaḍātmanā //
sītāṃ prayaccha rāmāya rājyaṃ dehi vibhīṣaṇe /
vanaṃ yāhi mahābāho ramyaṃ muniganāśrayam //

By getting the demon race killed or destroyed one by one in the war, what will you benefit even if you live, even if you have your kingdom, even if you manage to have Sita, or even by having this body which is gross, inert and unworthy? (45). Oh the one with very strong arms (i.e. one who is valiant and valorous, brave and courageous, strong and invincible, one with a formidable reputation as an invincible warrior)! I advise you to give Sita back to Sri Ram and the kingdom to Vibhishan, and (stepping in the shoes of a Vanprastha) you should then go to a pleasant forest inhabited by sages, hermits and ascetics (to do penances and austerities in their company) (46).

स्नात्वा प्रातः शुभजले कृत्वा सन्ध्यादिकाः क्रियाः। तत एकान्तमाश्रित्य सुखासनपरिग्रहः।। 47।।
विसृज्य सर्वतः सङ्गमितरान्विषयान्बहिः। बहिःप्रवृत्ताक्षगणं शनैः प्रत्यक् प्रवाहय।। 48।।

snātvā prātaḥ śubhajale kṛtvā sandhyādikāḥ kriyāḥ /
tata ekāntamāśritya sukhāsanaparigrahaḥ //
visṛjya sarvataḥ saṅgamitarānviṣayānbahiḥ /
bahiḥpravṛttākṣagaṇaṃ śanaiḥ pratyak pravāhaya //

There in the forest, have a bath in the morning in clean water, and then perform 'Sandhya' (a religious sacrament ordained to be done regularly by Hindus at least three times a day—at dawn, noon and dusk) and other daily rituals. Then sit on a comfortable seat (prayer mat) in a lonely and secluded place (47).

Then, gradually, step by step you should detach yourself from all

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exterior attachments and contacts that your body and its sense organs have with the external deluding world of artificiality. Then you should divert your senses, which have a natural and inherent tendency to swerve towards the external world of material comfort and sensual pleasure, away from the outside world towards your inner self (48).

प्रकृतेर्भिन्नमात्मानं विचारय सदानघ। चराचरं जगत्कृत्स्नं देहबुद्धीन्द्रियादिकम्।। 49।।
आब्रह्मस्तम्बपर्यन्तं दृश्यते श्रूयते च यत्। सैषा प्रकृतिरित्युक्ता सैव मायेति कीर्तिता।।50।।

prakṛterbhinnamātmānaṃ vicāraya sadānagha /
carācaraṃ jagatkṛtsnaṃ dehabuddhīndriyādikam //
ābrahmastambaparyantaṃ dṛśyate śrūyate ca yat /
saiṣā prakṛtirityuktā saiva māyeti kīrtitā //

Oh Anagh (i.e. the sinless, pure and faultless one)! Always treat your Atma (soul, pure self, pure consciousness) as being separate and distinct entity from your 'Prakriti' (i.e. nature, inherent tendencies, inclinations). This whole animate as well as inanimate world consisting of the body, the mind-intellect apparatus and the sense organs etc. (49), the visual or audible world (i.e. the world which is directly seen or is heard about), extending from the creator Brahma right up to the minutest insect, is all called 'Nature'. And this is also called Maya (the illusive, deluding, faulty, untrue, deceptive, misleading or mirage-like perception of the world) (50).

[Note :—Ravana has been called 'Anagh' by Kalnemi because he is talking about the Atma or soul of Ravana which is the true entity known by the name of Ravana for the purpose of identification. Soul is always pure and sinless. It is the body which may be sinful. The fact that Atma—which is the true and real self—is pure and sinless is one of the constant refrains of Vedant.]

सर्गस्थितिविनाशानां जगद्वृक्षस्य कारणम्। लोहितश्वेतकृष्णादिप्रजाः सृजति सर्वदा।। 51।।
कामक्रोधादिपुत्राद्यान्हिंसातृष्णादिकन्यकाः। मोहयन्त्यनिशं देवमात्मानं स्वैर्गुणैर्विभुम्।।52।।

sargasthitivināśānāṃ jagadvṛkṣasya kāraṇam /
lohitaśvetakṛṣṇādiprajāḥ sṛjati sarvadā //
kāmakrodhādiputrādyānhiṃsātṛṣṇādikanyakāḥ /
mohayantyaniśaṃ devamātmānaṃ svairguṇairvibhum //

It (Maya—or the delusion creating powers of the Lord) creates three types of creatures in the Lord's creation. They are (1) those who are 'white or fair complexioned' (i.e. creatures with predominance of

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Satvic tendencies), (2) those who are 'iron coloured or with a coloured complexion' (those with a complexion that is between white and dark, such as wheatish, yellow, etc. —i.e. creatures with predominance of Rajsic tendencies), (3) and those with 'dark complexion' (creatures with predominance of Tamsic tendencies) respectively. These creatures (representing the three basic qualities and temperaments that govern the functioning of the world) are the causes for creation, sustenance (existence) and annihilation (destruction) respectively of this whole world which is like a huge colossus tree (51). The same Maya uses its characteristic powers and casts its deluding spell on the pure, uncorrupt and supreme consciousness called the 'pure self' or the Atma which is no different from the supreme Lord who is all-pervading and all encompassing. As a result of this influence of the Maya on the pure self or Atma of a creature and its union with it, the Maya produces 'sons' in the shape of anger, wrath, malice, vehemence and tempest (called 'Krodh') as well as different worldly passions, lust, desires and yearnings that are never satisfied at any cost (called 'Kaam'), and 'daughters' in the shape of violence and the tendency to hurt others (called 'Hinsa') as well as never ending thirst, ambition, avarice, desires and greed (called 'Trishna') (52).

[Note :—We can understand this phenomenon with a simple example. A painter wishes to paint a landscape. He starts with a pure white canvas, and using his imagination and powers to visualise a magnificently beautiful scene, he starts painting with numerous primary colours and then goes on mixing these colours to produce umpteen numbers of colours of varying hues and shades. Besides the colour, he continuously adds a stroke here and a brush there as he tries to reveal on the lifeless canvas the conception of life as he visualises in his mind; he is never satisfied with his work and goes on and on endlessly adding colours and lines to the canvas. The result is most astounding and stupendous to behold. But still the painter is not satisfied; so the net result is that the canvas gets being redone over and over again, and layers after layers of lines that had been made and erased, of paints that had been painted over numerous times, of shapes and figures that had been visualised, rejected and reconceived and placed on the canvas only to make the painter uneasy about them. In short, the basic canvas that was pristine pure at the beginning has been reduced to scrap! The painter then keeps it aside or if totally disgusted with it, he may throw it in the garbage bin.

This all but sums up how the supreme Lord creates, develops and concludes the creation. The clean white canvas represents the Satwic qualities with which the Atma starts out. The painter is the supreme Lord

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or Brahm, the landscape he imagines is equivalent to Maya because it has no actual existence but is imagined by him, and he is so skilled a painter that once the painting is ready, the scene that is depicted on the canvas appears to be very real and live, creating an illusion of the grandeur of the actual thing; this is a deception because the painter has used his imagination as the subject of the painting, but an ignorant man who is not aware of this fact would believe that the painting has been inspired by some actual landscape that the painter must have seen somewhere. As a matter of fact, it might also happen that the scene does actually exist, but the painter has added touches of his own imagination to add vibrancy and colour to the scene about which the observer is unaware. The scene and the 3-dimensional landscape is equivalent to the creation and the colourful Nature. The paint and the primary colours used by the Lord during the process of creation to make it vibrant and lively are the different Gunas (virtues, qualities and characteristics), the various Vasanas (desires and passions) and Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations of a creature; his nature and temperaments) as well as the Tattwas (elements) which are fundamental to and inseparable from creation. The innumerable varieties of shades of characters, virtues and qualities that are present in the creature represent these myriad colours that the creator uses to paint his creation. Until at last the Lord stands back and is stumped at the Frankenstein Monster that he has unleashed! Then he decides to call it quits, and this is equivalent to annihilation of the creation. But as a painter he cannot sit quiet; and so starts the process once all over again!

Supposing the painter did not add his own name to the painting, or he had added a pseudonym. Then in such a case, there would be conjectures about his identity, leading to so many theories and debates. Then some wise man would look up the archives and dig up some evidence about who he was. This is exactly what happens here in the case of creation—no one knows for sure who that creator is, what is his name, etc. Some wise and enlightened man came to unearth the truth about him, and he tried to tell others in the words he could muster. This is how the great maverick Lord has been known and recognised by us. When his glories are sung, it is actually praising the great painter for his skills and the matchless heritage that he has created for us to cherish and behold.

The colours 'white', 'red' or 'dark' and the various shades created from them are only symbolic of the innumerable variations in which the basic qualities can combine to produce countless number of characteristics and virtues and behaviours that give individuality to millions and millions of creatures. These are simply metaphors only meant to explain and help visualise certain things, and therefore should not be taken too literally as meaning that dark skinned people are sinful and pervert and worthy of condemnation, or that fair skinned ones are all righteous and noble, for just the opposite is witnessed daily in our lives.

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Now let's have a brief glimpse at these three qualities that decide.

(a) 'Sat Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature, (b) 'Raj Guna or quality' pertains to worldly passions, desires and ambition etc., while (c) 'Tam Guna or quality' is the lowest and meanest of the three qualities leading to various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. The permutations and combinations of these three qualities create a particular nature of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g., two men —might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in eighty four Lakh wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically eighty four Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these 3 basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The Satwic quality or Guna is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the 3 characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

The Rajsic quality or Guna can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the 3 characteristics, the worst type to posses, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et.al.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For

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example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajsic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them. Kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajsic' quality in them, while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man.

An understanding about 'Maya' is most relevant here. 'Maya' is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half has a negative connotation. 'Ma' means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of', while the second part 'Ya' means 'this or that'. 'Ma' has a negative connotation. Therefore, the composite word Maya means neither this nor that; anything that is not real; that which is deluding, illusionary, deceptive, mirage like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these phenomenons. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, impostering, deceitful, invisible and para-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth.

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called 'Trigunmayi' (त्रिगुनमयि), i.e. one which has the 3 Gunas or qualities. These 3 Gunas or qualities are— Sat, Raj and Tam. 'Sat' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raj' is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tam' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tam' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sat' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tam' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures having different

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temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanors and mental setup in this world.

When a man understands any 'Truth' after rigorously examining the 'truthfulness' of that truth, when he has established the veracity of facts, he believes in it more firmly and more convincingly. No matter what other people tell him about the truth being not the correct or the whole truth, he would not listen to them, simply because he has verified the facts for himself, he has witnessed the truth himself, he has logically eliminated all falsehoods to deduce that what he knows is the 'truthful Truth'. His Truth is based on rigid and solid foundation; he is unwavering and steady in it. If he is steadfast and convinced in his knowledge, no matter how much ignorance and delusions (Maya) try to push him away from the absolute 'Truth', he will remain steadfast and unwavering in it. There will be no doubts and confusions in his mind.

The above concept of the three Gunas of Sat, Raj and Tam have also been described in Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 11-12; ditto—Canto 5, verse nos. 13-15; Aranya Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 30; ditto—Canto 3, verse nos. 24-31; ditto—Canto 8, verse no. 52; Kishkindha Kand, Canto 3, verse no. 25 and Lanka Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 73-75.]

कर्तृत्वभोक्तृत्वमुखान् स्वगुणानात्मनीश्वरे। आरोप्य स्ववशं कृत्वा तेन क्रीडति सर्वदा ।। 53 ।।
शुद्धोऽप्यात्मा यया युक्तः पश्यतीव सदा बहिः। विस्मृत्य च स्वमात्मानं मायागुणविमोहितः ।।54 ।।

kartṛtvabhoktṛtvamukhān svaguṇānātmanīśvare /
āropya svavaśaṃ kṛtvā tena krīḍati sarvadā //
śuddho'pyātmā yayā yuktaḥ paśyatīva sadā bahiḥ /
vismṛtya ca svamātmānaṃ māyāguṇavimohitaḥ //

Once it (the Maya) establishes its nearness and union with its Lord called the Atma, it does not hesitate to impose its deceptive and misleading charms on even her master or Lord. As a result, the Atma begins to have the erroneous notions of being a 'doer' and 'one who enjoys or suffers' from what is done. The Maya is so powerful and potent that it is able to have its deluding effects even on the wise and pure conscious Atma. [Then say, how can one measure its potentials? The best way not to fall in its trap is to avoid it altogether.]

As a result of this, the Atma comes under the spell of the Maya (or the Atma becomes a tool in the hands of the Maya, or become subjected to it). The Maya keeps on playing with the Atma as if it were a toy in its hands. The Maya uses the Atma as a plaything or a puppet and makes the latter dance to its tunes (53).

When the Atma is subjected to the deluding influences of Maya, it

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is affected by it and forgets its original pure and uncorrupted form and nature. Inspite of being pure and uncorrupt by nature (which is its basic quality), it begins to look constantly outwardly towards the external sensual objects of this mundane, materialistic, artificial, entrapping and deluding world (54).

[Note :—Concept of 'doer and enjoyer or sufferor' is also explained in Ram Gita, Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 34 and 45.]

यदा सद्गुरुणा युक्तो बोध्यते बोधरूपिणा। निवृत्तदृष्टिरात्मानं पश्यत्येव सदा स्फुटम्।। 55।।
जीवन्मुक्तः सदा देही मुच्यते प्राकृतैर्गुणैः। त्वमप्येवं सदात्मानं विचार्य नियतेन्द्रियः।। 56।।

yadā sadguruṇā yukto bodhyate bodharūpiṇā/
nivṛttadṛṣṭirātmānaṃ paśyatyeva sadā sphuṭam//
jīvanmukta sadā dehī mucyate prākṛterguṇaiḥ/
tvamapyevaṃ sadātmānaṃ vicārya niyatendriyaḥ//

When it (Atma) interacts (i.e. comes in contact or has interface) with a wise teacher or moral guide called a Guru, and the latter kindles the pure light of enlightenment for it (or makes the Atma aware of the nature of its real, true 'self' which is pure and enlightened consciousness which the Atma had forgotten under the influence/ spell of Maya), the Atma regrets and relents, and it diverts or removes its sight from the external world surrounding it and directs its attention once again towards its pure self and sees it clearly as being pristine pure, true enlightened consciousness in its crystal clear divine form which is without any blemishes, taints and corruptions (55).

When this happens, the creature with a body becomes truly liberated from this artificial and ensnaring mundane world, and frees itself from the qualities, good or bad, inherent to this world and intrinsic to it. (Oh Ravana!) You must resolve to become self-restrained, and must concentrate and meditate upon your basic, true, pristine pure and uncorrupted nature or form (56).

प्रकृतेरन्यमात्मानं ज्ञात्वा मुक्तो भविष्यसि। ध्यातुं यद्यसमर्थोऽसि सगुणं देवमाश्रय।। 57।।
हृत्पद्मकर्णिके स्वर्णपीठे मणिगणान्विते। मृदुश्लक्ष्णतरे तत्र जानक्या सह संस्थितम्।।58।।

prakṛteranyamātmānaṃ jñātvā mukto bhaviṣyasi/
dhyātuṃ yadyasamartho'si saguṇaṃ devamāśraya//
hṛtpadmakarṇike svarṇapīṭhe maṇiganānvite/
mṛduślakṣṇatare tatra jānakyā saha saṃsthitam//

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By doing so, you will realise that the Atma is different from Nature (the world—both visual and invisible; literally 'Prakriti') and, as a result, you shall become liberated and delivered from the shackles of delusions and misconceptions by which you are tied at present. Besides, if you are unable to concentrate or meditate as described above (in verse nos. 49-56), you should rely on the 'Sagun' aspect of the Lord, i.e. have devotion, dedication, affection and adoration for the Lord's revealed form, worship him in this form, have faith, belief, trust and conviction in him who is none else than the formed variant or manifestation of that entity that is essentially and fundamentally 'Nirgun', i.e. who has no forms, no attributes, no names and no definitions and titles, but is nevertheless is the supreme Lord of the world (57).

[Now, from verse nos. 58-63, Kalnemi describes how to worship the Sagun aspect of the Lord God—] In the petals of the lotus-like heart, there is a gem-studded, most charming and pleasant golden throne. On it is seated 'he' (Sri Ram—refer verse no. 61) along with Janki (Sita) (58).

[Note :—Kalnemi has described two clear cut ways for emancipation and salvation—one is based on the Vedantic philosophy of Nirgun Atma and the fact that it is one with the Parmatma or the supreme Soul, and the second lays stress/emphasis on Bhakti or devotion, adoration and worship of the Sagun God. Both are the two sides of the same coin called the path to emancipation, liberation, deliverance and salvation, or the attainment of 'Moksha'.]

वीरासनं विशालाक्षं विद्युत्पुञ्जनिभाम्बरम्। किरीटहारकेयूरकौस्तुभादिभिरन्वितम्।। 59।।
नूपुरैः कटकैर्भान्तं तथैव वनमालया। लक्ष्मणेन धनुर्द्वन्द्वकरेण परिसेवितम्।।60।।
एवं ध्यात्वा सदात्मानं रामं सर्वहृदि स्थितम्। भक्त्या परमया युक्तो मुच्यते नात्र संशयः।।61।।

vīrāsanaṃ viśālākṣaṃ vidyutpuñjanibhāmbaram /
kirīṭahārakeyūrakaustubhādibhiranvitam //
nūpuraiḥ kaṭakairbhāntaṃ tathaiva vanamālayā /
lakṣmaṇena dhanurdvandvakareṇa parisevitam //
evaṃ dhyātvā sadātmānaṃ rāmaṃ sarvahṛdi sthitam /
bhaktyā paramayā yukto mucyate nātra saṃśayaḥ //

He (Sri Ram) is sitting in the 'Viraasan' posture (a sitting posture of Yoga, so called because it is used by those who are ever alert, brave and bold, ready to get up and move fearlessly), has very large and

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charming eyes, his clothes resemble the splendour, brilliance and radiance of a 'creeper-of-light' (a reference to the streak of lightening in the dark clouds in the sky), he is adorned by a tiara, a necklace, armlets and a Kaustav Mani (a jewel worn by Lord Vishnu) and other ornaments. He looks stupendously magnificent, charming and enchanting (59) wearing anklets, ear pins or nose pins and a Vanmala (a garland worn by Vishnu, generally made of marigold), who is served by Laxman holding two bows (one belonging to him and the other kept ready for Sri Ram) (60), and who resides in the heart of all the creatures as their 'true self or Atma'. If you (Ravana) meditate upon this view or vision of Sri Ram (as described in verse nos. 46-61) with full devotion, dedication, conviction, faith and belief, there is no doubt that you will get emancipation and salvation (61). [Verse nos. 56-61 tell us about meditating on the Sagun form of the Lord.]

[Note :—The reader should refer to Kishkindha Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 11-40 where Sri Ram has described to Laxman how to worship him. This 'Sagun' form of worship has been noted as one of the forms of worship when the Lord preaches Shabari in Aranya Kand, canto 10 also.]

शृणु वै चरितं तस्य भक्तैर्नित्यमनन्यधीः। एवं चेत्कृतपूर्वाणि पापानि च महान्त्यपि।
क्षणादेव विनश्यन्ति यथाग्नेस्तूलराशयः।। 62।।

śṛṇu vai caritaṃ tasya bhaktairnityamananyadhīḥ/
evaṃ cetkṛtapūrvāṇi pāpāni ca mahāntyapi/
kṣaṇādeva vinaśyanti yathāgnestūlarāśayaḥ//

[Kalnemi further says that if it is also not possible for Ravana, then he should do the following—] You must daily listen to his (Sri Ram's) holy, pure and divine stories being narrated by the Lord's ardent devotees with due concentration of mind and heart, and with a devotional attitude and inclination. By doing so, all your previous great sins will perish (be destroyed or eliminated) literally in a second just like a mound or bundle of cotton perishes in raging fire (62).

[Note :—See Aranya Kand, Canto 16, verse nos. 21-28 in this context.]

भजस्व रामं परिपूर्णमेकं विहाय वैरं निजभक्तियुक्तः।
हृदा सदा भावितभावरूपमनामरूपं पुरुषं पुराणम्।। 63।।

bhajasva rāmaṃ paripūrṇamekaṃ vihāya vairaṃ nijabhaktiyuktaḥ/
hṛdā sadā bhāvitabhāvarūpamanāmarūpaṃ puruṣaṃ purāṇam//

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You must always worship and adore, have dedication and devotion for, have firm faith, conviction and belief in Sri Ram who is complete in all respects, and is the only one of his kind (i.e. he is unique, without a parallel or anyone to compare himself with). You should forsake all animosity, hatred and ill-will with him, and instead involve yourself with self-inspired and sustained devotion for him who is without any name or form, and is the Viraat Purush lauded and extolled in the Purans (as the all-pervading, all-encompassing macrocosmic supreme Soul which is the manifestation of the supreme truth called Brahm). You must always concentrate and meditate upon such a Lord in your heart. The Lord can assume any form which is compatible and in consonant with the desires, pleasures and wishes of his devotees (i.e. the Lord assumes a form in which his devotee wishes to worship him) (63).

[Note :—Verse nos. 46-63 can be called the gospel of Kalnemi for the benefit of Ravana. From the above description as well as the gospels propounded by other non-humans—e.g. the vulture Jatau, demons Kabandh, Kalnemi, Vibhishan, Shuk, Viradh, Kumbhakarn, Marich etc.—it is clear that in those days even non-humans were very wise, enlightened, erudite and chastened. They were great non-human philosophers in their right earnest even as the exalted sages and seers were amongst the humans.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 7

Kalnemi's deception and his death at the hands of Hanuman; Laxman's revival; Ravana instigates Kumbhakarn into battle

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

कालनेमिवचः श्रुत्वा रावणोऽमृतसन्निभम्। जज्वाल क्रोधताम्राक्षः सर्पिरद्धिरिवाग्निमत्॥1॥
निहन्मि त्वां दुरात्मानं मच्छासनपराङ्मुखम्। परैः किञ्चिद्गृहीत्वा त्वं भाषसे रामकिङ्करः॥2॥

śrīmahādeva uvāca

kālanemivacaḥ śrutvā rāvaṇo'mṛtasannibham /
jajvāla krodhatāmrākṣaḥ sarpiradbhirivāgnimat //
nihanmi tvāṃ durātmānaṃ macchāsanaparāṅmukham /
parai kiñcidgṛhītvā tvaṃ bhāṣase rāmakiṃkaraḥ //

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Lord Shiva said—Oh Parvati! Hearing these words of Kalnemi which were actually equivalent to Amrit (the nectar of eternal life and all-beneficial) for him, Ravana became fired with exasperation, indignation, wrath and anger, and his eyes became red as if water had been sprinkled on Ghee (clarified butter) which has been heated on fire, resulting in the latter sputtering and sizzling. [That is, Ravana became extremely annoyed, peeved and vehement, muttered and cursed, probably clenched his teeth and grinded them, shook and trembled with anger, and threatened Kalnemi with dire consequences.] (1).

Ravana threatened, 'I shall kill you, oh you wicked one, for disobeying me. It appears that you have taken something from (i.e. have been bribed by) my enemy that you speak as if you were a servant of Sri Ram' (2).

कालनेमिरुवाचेदं रावणं देव किं क्रुधा। न रोचते मे वचनं यदि गत्वा करोमि तत्।। 3।।
इत्युक्त्वा प्रययौ शीघ्रं कालनेमिर्महासुरः। नोदितो रावणेनैव हनूमद्विघ्नकारणात्।।4।।

kālanemiruvācedaṃ rāvaṇaṃ deva kiṃ krudhā /
na rocate me vacanaṃ yadi gatvā karomi tat //
ityuktvā prayayau śīghraṃ kālanemirmahāsuraḥ /
nodito rāvaṇenaiva hanūmadvighnakāraṇāt //

Then Kalnemi said to Ravana, 'Oh Lord! Why do you become so angry? If you do not like what I have said, then I shall go and do as you tell me' (3).

Saying this, the great demon Kalnemi went from there immediately to create hindrance in Hanuman's work (create an obstacle in his path) at the behest of Ravana (4).

स गत्वा हिमवत्पार्श्वं तपोवनमकल्पयत्। तत्र शिष्यैः परिवृतो मुनिवेषधरः खलः।। 5।।
गच्छतो मार्गमासाद्य वायुसूनोर्महात्मनः। ततो गत्वा ददर्शाथ हनूमानाश्रमं शुभम्।। 6।।
चिन्तयामास मनसा श्रीमान्पवननन्दनः। पुरा न दृष्टमेतन्मे मुनिमण्डलमुत्तमम्।।7।।

sa gatvā himavatpārśvaṃ tapovanamakalpayat /
tatra śiṣyaiḥ parivṛto muniveṣadharaḥ khalaḥ //
gacchato mārgamāsādya vāyusūnormahātmanaḥ /
tato gatvā dadarśātha hanūmānāśramaṃ śubham //
cintayāmāsa manasā śrīmānpavanānandanaḥ /
purā na dṛṣṭametanme munimaṇḍalamuttamam //

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That imposter and wicked fellow went to the foothills of the Himalayas and created an illusionary mirage-like Tapovan (i.e. a forest where hermits, ascetics and sages live to do penances and austerities), and seated himself disguised as a hermit surrounded by his disciples (5). That spot was directly on the path by which Hanuman was going (cruising) through the air. When he reached the site, he saw that beautiful and auspicious looking hermitage (6). The son of the Wind God (Hanuman) thought to himself, 'When I went by this way on the earlier occasion, I had not seen this magnificent group of hermits and their hermitage (7).

मार्गो विभ्रंशितो वा मे भ्रमो वा चित्तसम्भवः। यद्वाविश्याश्रमपदं दृष्ट्वा मुनिमशेषतः।। 8।।
पीत्वा जलं ततो यामि द्रोणाचलमनुत्तमम्। इत्युक्त्वा प्रविवेशाथ सर्वतो योजनायतम्।।9।।
आश्रमं कदलीशालखर्जूरपनसादिभिः। समावृतं पक्वफलैर्नम्रशाखैश्च पादपैः।।10।।

mārgo vibhraṃśito vā me bhramo vā cittasambhavaḥ /
yadvāviśyāśramapadaṃ dṛṣṭvā munimaśeṣataḥ //
pītvā jalaṃ tato yāmi droṇācalamanuttamam /
ityuktvā praviveśātha sarvato yojanāyatam //
āśramaṃ kadalīśālakharjūrapanasādibhiḥ /
samāvṛtaṃ pakvaphalairnamraśākhaiśca pādapaiḥ //

Have I lost my way or am I having some hallucination or optical illusion in my mind. Well, let me go to that hermitage nevertheless and see (meet) those exalted sages (8), drink some water, and after that (having relaxed a bit and refreshed myself) I shall proceed to the Dronachal mountain which is the best among all the mountains'.

Deciding thus, he went to that illusionary hermitage. It was spread in an area of one Yojan (roughly 8 square miles) in all the directions (9). It was full of fruit trees such as plantain, date palm and jackfruit etc. which were so much laden with ripe fruits that their branches were bent under their weight. Besides these trees, there were Sal trees also (10).

वैरभावविनिर्मुक्तं शुद्धं निर्मललक्षणम्। तस्मिन्महाश्रमे रम्ये कालनेमिः स राक्षसः।। 11।।
इन्द्रयोगं समास्थाय चकार शिवपूजनम्। हनूमानभिवाद्याह गौरवेण महासुरम्।। 12।।

vairabhāvavinirmuktaṃ śuddhaṃ nirmalalakṣaṇam /
tasminmahāśrame ramye kālanemiḥ sa rākṣasaḥ //

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indrayogaṃ samāsthāya cakāra śivapūjanam /
hanūmānabhivādyāha gauraveṇa mahāsuram //

That pure and holy-looking hermitage was devoid of any hint of malefic and cunning intentions of hate and animosity. Inside that great and pleasant hermitage, the demon Kalnemi (11) was meditating (doing Yoga) and worshipping Lord Shiva by invoking the great magical occult practice called 'Indrajal' (literally the witchcraft of deception invoking Lord Shiva's occult Mantras. Here it means that he tried the trick of appearing to worship Shiva whereas there was no Shivalingam at the place. It was a pure deceptive trick used by him to impress upon Hanuman that he is a pure hearted and devout hermit and a devotee of Lord Shiva). Hanuman bowed before him in reverence with great respect as well as with a sense of honour, importance and pride (12).

[Note :—The word 'Gaurav' also means stateliness, importance, prestige and majesty. So, by saying Hanuman felt important, honourable and proud, it is meant that since Hanuman was doing the work of Sri Ram, he hoped that he would be welcomed with open arms, offered respects and refreshments, a short break and then allowed to proceed ahead with a warm send off. Lord Ram is worshipped by Shiva, and the latter had been also worshipped by the former at Rameshwaram before departure for Lanka. Lord Shiva is famed as Rameshwar as he is the God who is worshipped by Sri Ram, who is in turn worshipped by Lord Shiva. Hanuman felt assured that he was in good company where the Lord of his own Lord was being worshipped, and so there was no fear of harm. Further, he felt proud of the fact that Sri Ram had selected him to do all the odd jobs for him—such as riding on his shoulders, sending him on various errands, embracing him and blessing him etc., besides selecting and trusting him with this most vital and precious job which no body else could have possibly have done. It was a prestigious job and an honour to become Sri Ram's personal messenger—everyone cannot have that privilege. That is the reason he felt proud of himself when he saw Shiva being worshipped there. He felt proud also because now he would have a chance to show the world the fate of a person who creates hindrances in the path of those who are carrying out the mandate of the Lord.]

भगवन् रामदूतोऽहं हनूमान्नाम नामतः। रामकार्येण महता क्षीराब्धिं गन्तुमुद्यतः।। 13।।
तृषा मां बाधते ब्रह्मन्नुदकं कुत्र विद्यते। यथेच्छं पातुमिच्छामि कथ्यतां मे मुनीश्वर।। 14।।

bhagavan rāmadūto'haṃ hanūmānnāma nāmataḥ /
rāmakāryeṇa mahatā kṣīrābdhiṃ gantumudyataḥ //

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tṛṣā māṃ bādhate brahmannudakaṃ kutra vidyate /
yathecchaṃ pātumicchāmi kathyatāṃ me munīśvara //

He said to the cunning Kalnemi, 'Oh the exalted one! I am a messenger of Sri Ram. My name is Hanuman and I am going to the 'Kshir Sagar' on some great work of Sri Ram (13). Oh Brahmin! I am very thirsty and wish to drink a lot of water. Oh great sage! Please tell me the place where there is water here?' (14).

तच्छ्रुत्वा मारुतेर्वाक्यं कालनेमिस्तमब्रवीत्। कमण्डलुगतं तोयं मम त्वं पातुमर्हसि।। 15।।
भुङ्क्ष्व चेमानि पक्वानि फलानि तदनन्तरम्। निवसस्व सुखेनात्र निद्रामेहि त्वरास्तु मा।। 16।।

tacchrutvā mārutervākyaṃ kālanemistamabravīt /
kamaṇḍalugataṃ toyaṃ mama tvaṃ pātumarhasi //
bhuṅkṣva cemāni pakvāni phalāni tadanantaram /
nivasasva sukhenātra nidrāmehi tvarāstu mā //

Hearing these words of Maruti (Hanuman), Kalnemi replied, 'You can drink the water of my Kamandalu (a pot of water carried by hermits; it is generally made from dried, hollowed out, round pumpkin) (15). Quench your hunger by eating the ripe fruits here, then sleep a while and take some rest. Do not be in such a tearing hurry (16).

भूतं भव्यं भविष्यं च जानामि तपसा स्वयम्। उत्थितो लक्ष्मणः सर्वे वानरा रामवीक्षिताः।। 17।।
तच्छ्रुत्वा हनुमानाह कमण्डलुजलेन मे। न शाम्यत्यधिका तृष्णा ततो दर्शय मे जलम्।। 18।।

bhūtaṃ bhavyaṃ bhaviṣyaṃ ca jānāmi tapasā svayam /
utthito lakṣmaṇaḥ sarve vānarā rāmavīkṣitāḥ //
tacchrutvā hanumānāha kamaṇḍalujalena me /
na śāmyatyadhikā tṛṣṇā tato darśaya me jalam //

On the strength of my severe penances and austerities (Tapa), I know all about the past, the present and the future. Presently, Laxman and other monkeys have become conscious and have got up (i.e. they have regained their consciousness and have been revived back to life) when Sri Ram saw them or glanced at them with his divine, life-giving miraculous glance' (17). Hearing this, Hanuman said, 'I have a great thirst. It cannot be quenched by the little water of the Kamandalu. So, show me a pond or a large body of water' (18).

[Note :—Kalnemi said a lie in order to impress upon Hanuman that there was no need to hurry and worry when he said that he knew all about the

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past, present and future, and that Laxman and other monkeys were revived by Sri Ram's rejuvenating, benevolent glance. It was a cunning ploy to divert Hanuman's attention and make him complacent in the false belief that there was no need now for the herb, and there was no need for the tearing hurry to bring the mountain. Hanuman could have guessed that there was something amiss here because the very fact that Lord Ram had sent him was proof that there were no options left. It is absurd to belief that the Lord would not have tried his best to revive Laxman and others if it had been within his reach, especially if it was as easy as a benevolent glance! In the present instance however, Hanuman could not see through the trick. This episode shows the drawbacks and the negative effects of Ahankar or pride; it makes a man over-confident of his own self, leading to disastrous consequences. Further, Kalnemi advised him to take it easy and relax by sleeping, eating, bathing etc. so that the specific time slot within which Laxman was to be revived elapsed. Also, Kalnemi might have planned to kill Hanuman while he was asleep.]

तथेत्याज्ञापयामास वटुं मायाविकल्पितम्। वटो दर्शय विस्तीर्णं वायुसूनोर्जलाशयम्।। 19।।
निमील्य चाक्षिणी तोयं पीत्वा गच्छ ममान्तिकम्। उपदेक्ष्यामि ते मन्त्रं येन द्रक्ष्यसि चौषधीः।।20।।

tathetyājñāpayāmāsa vaṭuṃ māyāvikalpitam /
vaṭo darśaya vistīrṇaṃ vāyusūnorjalāśayam //
nimīlya cākṣiṇī toyaṃ pītvāgaccha mamāntikam /
upadekṣyāmi me mantraṃ yena drakṣyasi cauṣadhīḥ //

Saying 'alright', he ordered an illusive or mirage-like deceptive Brahmachari (a celibate Brahmin who is a student of a hermit), who was created by Kalnemi by using his magical powers of creating illusions, 'Oh Brahmachari! Show the son of the Wind God that large pond or lake over there' (19). Turning to Hanuman he said, 'Close your eyes while you drink water, and then come to me immediately. I shall teach you a divine Mantra (a magical group of words; in modern parlance, a formulae) by the help of which you will be able to see (recognise) the medicine (herb)' (20).

[Note—Hanuman should have become suspicious when he was advised to close his eyes while drinking water, a request which seems most absurd even on the face of it.]

तथेति दर्शितं शीघ्रं वटुना सलिलाशयम्। प्रविश्य हनुमांस्तोयमपिबन्मीलितेक्षणः।। 21।।
ततश्चागत्य मकरी महामाया महाकपिम्। अग्रसत्तं महावेगान्मारुतिं घोररूपिणी।। 22।।

tatheti darśitaṃ śīghraṃ vaṭunā salilāśayam /
praviśya hanumāṃstoyamapibanmīlitekṣaṇaḥ //

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tataścāgatya makarī mahāmāyā mahākapim /
agrasattaṃ mahavegānmārutiṃ ghorarūpiṇī //

Then the Brahmin said 'alright' and showed the body of water to him immediately. Hanuman entered it and began drinking water with closed eyes (as advised by Kalnemi) (21). Just at that instant, a huge she-alligator named Makari, who was formidable and horribly horrifying in shape and size, and who was very illusive, deceitful and full of dirty tricks, came quickly to gobble up the great monkey Maruti (thinking that Hanuman was weak, meek, foolish and gullible enough, and could be easily trapped by her tricks) (22).

ततो ददर्श हनुमान् ग्रसन्तीं मकरीं रुषा। दारयामास हस्ताभ्यां वदनं सा ममार ह।। 23।।
ततोऽन्तरिक्षे ददृशे दिव्यरूपधराङ्गना। धान्यमालीति विख्याता हनूमन्तमथाब्रवीत्।। 24।।

tato dadarśa hanumān grasantīṃ makarīṃ ruṣā /
dārayāmāsa hastābhyāṃ vadanaṃ sā mamāra ha //
tato'ntarikṣe dadṛśe divyarūpadharāṅganā /
dhānyamālīti vikhyātā hanūmantamathābravīt //

When Hanuman saw (i.e. found out) that the she-alligator (Makari) was swallowing him up, he was furious with anger and tore apart her mouth with his hands. As a result of this, she died instantly (23). Just at that moment, a woman with a divine form was seen in the sky. Her name was Dhanyamali. She said to Hanuman (24)—

त्वत्प्रसादादहं शापाद्विमुक्तास्मि कपीश्वर। शप्ताहं मुनिना पूर्वमप्सराः कारणान्तरे।। 25।।
आश्रमे यस्तु ते दृष्टः कालनेमिर्महासुरः। रावणप्रहितो मार्गे विघ्नं कर्तुं तवानघ।। 26।।

tvatprasādādahaṃ śāpādvimuktāsmi kapeśvara /
śaptāhaṃ muninā pūrvamapsarāḥ kāraṇāntare //
āśrame yastu te dṛṣṭaḥ kālanemirmahāsuraḥ /
rāvaṇaprahito mārge vighnaṃ kartuṃ tavānagha //

Oh the Lord of monkeys! By your grace, I have been liberated and delivered from my curse. Previously, I was an Apsara (celestial damsel working in the court of the king of Gods, Indra). Due to some reason, a sage had cursed me (by which I had become an alligator) (25). The person you have seen in the hermitage is a great demon called Kalnemi. Oh the sinless, pure and faultless one (Anagh)! Ravana has sent him to cause obstacles in your path (26).

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मुनिवेषधरो नासौ मुनिर्विप्रविहिंसकः। जहि दुष्टं गच्छ शीघ्रं द्रोणाचलमनुत्तमम्।। 27।।
गच्छाम्यहं ब्रह्मलोकं त्वत्स्पर्शाद्धतकल्मषा। इत्युक्त्वा सा ययौ स्वर्गं हनूमानप्यथाश्रमम्।।28।।

muniveṣadharo nāsau munirvipravihiṃsakaḥ /
jahi duṣṭaṃ gaccha śīghraṃ droṇācalamanuttamam //
gacchāmyahaṃ brahmalokaṃ tvatsparśāddhatakalmaṣā /
ityuktvā sā yayau svargaṃ hanūmānapyathāśramam //

That fellow who is disguised as a hermit is not a hermit at all; in fact, he is a killer of Brahmins and sages. You must kill this rascal quickly and then proceed to Dronachal which is the best amongst the mountains (27). I have become freed from sins and blemishes of all kinds by your touch and am now going to the abode of Brahma'. Saying so, she went to the heaven, and Hanuman also went back to the hermitage (28).

आगतं तं समालोक्य कालनेमिरभाषत। किं विलम्बेन महता तव वानरसत्तम।। 29।।
गृहाण मत्तो मन्त्रांस्त्वं देहि मे गुरुदक्षिणाम्। इत्युक्तो हनुमान्मुष्टिं दृढं बद्ध्वाह राक्षसम्।।30।।

āgataṃ taṃ samālokya kālanemirabhāṣata /
kiṃ vilambena mahatā tava vānarasattama //
gṛhāṇa matto mantrāṃstvaṃ dehi me gurudakṣiṇām /
ityukto hanumānmuṣṭiṃ dṛḍhaṃ baddhvāha rākṣasam //

Seeing him come back, Kalnemi said, 'Oh the best among the monkeys! What will you gain by delaying any further? (29). Take the Mantra from me and give me my Guru Dakshina (the offering of some gift to the teacher in return for the initiation ceremony by accepting the holy Mantra given by him; in modern terms, the teacher's fees)'. When he said so, Hanuman clenched his fists tight and said to the demon (30)—

गृहाण दक्षिणामेतामित्युक्त्वा निजघान तम्। विसृज्य मुनिवेषं स कालनेमिर्महासुरः।। 31।।
युयुधे वायुपुत्रेण नानामायाविधानतः। महामायिकदूतोऽसौ हनूमान्मायिनां रिपुः।।32।।

gṛhāṇa dakṣiṇāmetāmityuktvā nijaghāna tam /
visṛjya muniveṣaṃ sa kālanemirmahāsuraḥ //
yuyudhe vāyuputreṇa nānāmāyāvidhānataḥ /
mahāmāyikaduto'sau hanūmānmāyināṃ ripuḥ //

'Take your fees first', and he hit (punched) him (Kalnemi) hard with his clenched fists. Instantly, the great demon abandoned his

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disguise of a hermit, and assuming different illusive forms and employing various tricks, he began to fight with the son of the Wind God (Hanuman). But the latter was the messenger of the greatest of tricksters and magicians in the creation, that is Sri Ram, and he was an enemy of the lowly, sinful and inconsequential demons. [So, how could Hanuman ever be affected by these wretched imposters and their dirty tricks?] (31-32).

जघान मुष्टिना शीर्ष्णि भग्नमूर्धा ममार सः। ततः क्षीरनिधिं गत्वा दृष्ट्वा द्रोणं महागिरिम्।। 33।।
अदृष्ट्वा चौषधीस्तत्र गिरिमुत्पाट्य सत्वरः। गृहीत्वा वायुवेगेन गत्वा रामस्य सन्निधिम्।। 34।।
उवाच हनुमान् राममानीतोऽयं महागिरिः। यद्युक्तं कुरु देवेश विलम्बो नात्र युज्यते।। 35।।

jaghāna muṣṭinā śīrṣṇi bhagnamūrdhā mamāra saḥ/
tataḥ kṣīranidhiṃ gatvā dṛṣṭvā droṇaṃ mahāgirim//
adṛṣṭvā cauṣadhīstatra girimutpāṭya satvaraḥ/
gṛhītvā vāyuvegena gatvā rāmasya sannidhim//
uvāca hanumān rāmamānīto'yaṃ mahāgiriḥ/
yadyuktaṃ kuru deveśa vilambo nātra yujyate//

He (Hanuman) hit his head with a clenched fist which resulted in his death due to a cracked skull. Thence, Hanuman reached the 'Kshir Sagar' and saw Mt. Dronachal (33). But he could not see (find or trace) the required herbal medicine. So he swiftly uprooted and lifted the mountain itself in his hands, and took off with the speed of wind to where Sri Ram was (34).

When he reached there, he said to Sri Ram, 'Oh the Lord of Gods! I have brought you the great mountain. Now do whatever you think fit. It will not be proper to delay any further' (35).

[Note :—(1) The episode of Bharat shooting down Hanuman while he was over flying Ayodhya, as has been described by Tulsidas in him epic Ram Charit Manas in Lanka Kand, Doha 58-60, has been totally eliminated by Veda Vyas while writing this Ramayan.

(2) In the context of verse nos.33-34 which say that Hanuman could not 'see' the herb and had to uproot the entire mountain, we must read it with reference of canto 5, verse no.72 in which Sri Ram had clearly instructed Hanuman to bring the mountain itself, and to canto 6, verse no.33 in which the Lord instructs him to repeat the feat once again. Further, it should be understood in context of the note appended to verse no.33 of canto 6 wherein it is highlighted that the herbal medicine needed to be given 'live', i.e. directly from the soil where it grew, to make it effective and quick in action. Besides this, Sri Ram was an expert in the science of

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herbal medicine and he wanted to select the proper drug himself, as is borne out in canto 7, verse no.36-37 where it is clearly stated that after Hanuman had brought the mountain, the Lord selected the midicing himself and gave it to the herbal doctor named Sushen to administer it to Laxman. So Hanuman, when he sighted the mountain with glittering herbs could not decide what to do, and thought it prudent to bring the whole thing itself and let the Lord who was far more competent in this matter decide what to do.

Another plausible reason for Hanuman not being able to see the required herb is that probably either Ravana had done some trick to hide the medicine, or the herbs had undergone some physical change in external appearance since the last time Hanuman had seen them. This is not surprising because these were not ordinary plants; they had some special qualities and magical healing powers, and could have undergone some change in their physical appearance over time. Again, this episode highlights that the same Hanuman who is considered so wise and erudite has become confused when he became 'proud' of his abilities and privileges as is evident in verse no.12 above. The implied advice for us is not to be proud of any thing whatsoever, even of our Bhakti (devotion) for the Lord and our great fortune in being of any service to him, because the Lord is totally averse to Ahankar (pride and ego) in his devotees.]

श्रुत्वा हनूमतो वाक्यं रामः सन्तुष्टमानसः। गृहीत्वा चौषधीः शीघ्रं सुषेणेन महामतिः।। 36 ।।
चिकित्सां कारयामास लक्ष्मणाय महात्मने। ततः सुप्तोत्थित इव बुद्ध्वा प्रोवाच लक्ष्मणः।।37।।

śrutvā hanūmato vākyaṃ rāmaḥ santuṣṭamānasaḥ/
gṛhītvā cauṣadhīḥ śīghraṃ suṣeṇena mahamatiḥ//
cikitsāṃ kārayāmāsa lakṣmaṇāya mahātmane/
tataḥ suptotthita iva buddhvā provāca lakṣmaṇa//

Hearing these words of Hanuman, Sri Ram was very pleased. That wise one (Sri Ram) immediately picked (selected) the necessary medicine from that mountain and got the great soul Laxman treated by it through the wise and expert medicine-man named Sushen. Then Laxman became conscious as if he had woken up from a dream (36-37).

[Note :—Again a diversion from Tulsidas' Ram Charit Manas and the popular belief that the selection of the medicine and its administration were both done by Sushen. (See Ram Charit Manas of Tulsidas, Lanka Kand, Doha 62, Chaupai no. 2). Here, it was Sri Ram who had selected the necessary drug, and Sushen had only administered it to Laxman as a doctor's assistant in a clinic. Sri Ram did not wish to take the risk of letting Sushen do the selection—for he might have got it all wrong and

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jeopardize Laxman's life. This shows also that the Lord was an expert in the science of medicines!]

तिष्ठ तिष्ठ क्व गन्तासि हन्मीदानीं दशानन। इति ब्रुवन्तमालोक्य मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय राघवः।। 38।।
मारुतिं प्राह वत्साद्य त्वत्प्रसादान्महाकपे। निरामयं प्रपश्यामि लक्ष्मणं भ्रातरं मम।। 39।।

tiṣṭha tiṣṭha kva gantāsi hanmīdānīṃ daśānana /
iti bruvantamālokya mūrdhnyavaghrāya rāghavaḥ //
mārutiṃ prāha vatsādya tvatprasādānmahākape /
nirāmayaṃ prapaśyāmi lakṣmaṇaṃ bhrātaraṃ mama //

Then Laxman said (to Ravana), 'Oh the 10-headed one! Keep standing. Where will you escape now? I shall kill you right now'. Hearing him say so, Raghav (Sri Ram) smelt the head of Laxman (as a gesture of affection, blessing and happiness) (38) and said to Maruti (Hanuman), 'Oh son! Oh great monkey! It is because of your benevolence, kindness and grace that I have been able to see my brother Laxman healthy and alive today' (39).

इत्युक्त्वा वानरैः सार्धं सुग्रीवेण समन्वितः। विभीषणमतेनैव युद्धाय समवस्थितः।। 40।।
पाषाणैः पादपैश्चैव पर्वताग्रैश्च वानराः। युद्धायाभिमुखा भूत्वा ययुः सर्वे युयुत्सवः।।41।।

ityuktvā vānaraiḥ sārdhaṃ sugrīveṇa samanvitaḥ /
vibhīṣaṇamatenaiva yuddhāya samavasthitaḥ //
pāṣāṇaiḥ padapaiścaiva parvatāgraiśca vānarāḥ /
yuddhāyābhimukhā bhūtvā yayuḥ sarve yuyutsavaḥ //

Having said so, he began preparations for the war with the assistance of Sugriv, Vibhishan and other monkeys (40). Then the monkeys, who were very eager for battle, started off for the battle field armed with rocks, trees and summit of mountains (i.e. large boulders) etc. (41).

रावणो विव्यथे रामबाणैर्विद्धो महासुरः। मातङ्ग इव सिंहेन गरुडेनेव पन्नगः।। 42।।
अभिभूतोऽगमद्राजा राघवेण महात्मना। सिंहासने समाविश्य राक्षसानिदमब्रवीत्।। 43।।

rāvaṇo vivyathe rāmabāṇairviddho mahāsuraḥ /
mātaṅga iva siṃhena garuḍeneva pannagaḥ //
abhibhūto'gamadrājā rāghaveṇa mahātmanā /
siṃhāsane samāviśya rākṣasānidamabravīt //

On the other hand, the great demon Ravana had become extremely tormented, agitated, vexed, dazed and confounded by being hit and

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getting gravely wounded by Sri Ram's arrows just like an elephant becomes when attacked and wounded by a lion or a snake by an eagle or heron. [A lion attacks and deeply wounds an elephant though the latter is larger in size; similarly, the eagle or heron swoops down on a serpent and kills it instantly though the latter is very poisonous.] (42). The demon king was defeated at the hands of the great Raghav (Sri Ram) and went to Lanka for the time being. He sat on his throne and said to the demons (surrounding him) (43)—

मानुषेणैव मे मृत्युमाह पूर्वं पितामहः। मानुषो हि न मां हन्तुं शक्तोऽसि भुवि कश्चन।। 44।।
ततो नारायणः साक्षान्मानुषोऽभूत्र संशयः। रामो दाशरथिर्भूत्वा मां हन्तुं समुपस्थितः।।45।।

mānuṣeṇaiva me mṛtyumāha pūrvaṃ pitāmahaḥ/
mānuṣo hi na māṃ hantuṃ śakto'sti bhuvi kaścana//
tato nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣānmānuṣo'bhūnna saṃśayaḥ/
rāmo dāśarathirbhūtvā māṃ hantuṃ samupasthitaḥ//

'In an ancient time, the grandfather Brahma had forecast my death at the hands of a human, but there is no man in this world who can ever kill me (44).

Hence, there is no doubt that Lord Narayan (Vishnu) himself has manifested as a human in the form of Sri Ram, the son of Dashrath, and has come here to kill me (45).

अनरण्येन यत्पूर्वं शप्तोऽहं राक्षसेश्वर। उत्पत्स्यते च मद्वंशे परमात्मा सनातनः।। 46।।
तेन त्वं पुत्रपौत्रश्च बान्धवैश्च समन्वितः। हनिष्यसे न सन्देह इत्युक्त्वा मां दिवं गतः।। 47।।
स एव रामः संजातो मदर्थे मां हनिष्यति। कुम्भकर्णस्तु मूढात्मा सदा निद्रावशं गतः।। 48।।

anaraṇyena yatpūrvaṃ śapto'haṃ rākṣaseśvara/
utpatsyate ca madvaṃśe paramātmā sanātanaḥ//
tena tvaṃ putrapautraiśca bāndhavaiśca samanvitaḥ/
haniṣyase na sandeha ityuktvā māṃ divaṃ gataḥ//
sa eva rāmaḥ saṃjāto madarthe māṃ haniṣyati/
kumbhakarṇastu mūḍhātmā sadā nidrāvaśaṃ gataḥ//

In some previous time, Anaranya had cursed me, saying 'Oh king of demons! The truthful and eternal Supreme Being, Lord God, will incarnate (reveal) himself in my clan (46), and you will be killed at his hands without doubt along with your sons, grandsons, kith and kin, compatriots and friends'. And having said so, he had gone to the heaven (47). So, it is the same Sri Ram who has manifested himself for

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me and he will surely kill me. My brother Kumbhakarn is a very foolish and stupid fellow. He is always under the influence of sleep (i.e. he is such a clumsy lout that he always prefers to sleep and do nothing else) (48).

तं विबोध्य महासत्त्वमानयन्तु ममान्तिकम्। इत्युक्तास्ते महाकायास्तूर्णं गत्वा तु यत्नतः।। 49।।
विबोध्य कुम्भश्रवणं निन्यू रावणसन्निधिम्। नमस्कृत्य स राजानमासनोपरि संस्थितः।।50।।

taṃ vibodhya mahāsattvamānayantu mamāntikam/
ityuktāste mahākāyāstūrṇaṃ gatvā tu yatnataḥ//
vibodhya kumbhaśravaṇaṃ ninyū rāvaṇasannidhim/
namaskṛtya sa rājānamāsanopari saṃsthitaḥ//

You must go and wake him up, and then bring him here'. When he said so, the demons said 'alright' and the colossus demons went immediately and made diligent efforts to wake Kumbhakarn up from his deep slumber, and then brought him to Ravana. There, he (Kumbhakarn) showed his respects to the king and sat down on his designated seat (49-50).

[Note :—Ravana had found an excuse to keep away from the battle field as is evident from verse nos. 46-48. He was terrified of Sri Ram. He had realised that his game was up, so to say. So he started demurring and tried attrition tactics to wear Sri Ram and the monkey army down by sending Kumbhakarn and other demons one by one to the battle field, and himself waited for the last moment to strike hard at the war-weary enemy. It was a military strategy employed by him, but in vain.

Another reason was that once he was certain that the supreme Lord has himself come to visit him and give him an opportunity to attain liberation and deliverance from this evil body of a demon, it was his moral duty as a responsible king to ensure that all his subjects share the same fate as him and get salvation. To ensure this, he had sent them one by one as an offering in the purification fire sacrifice of death at the hands of the supreme Lord himself. What more can one expect from a king who in not selfish?]

तमाह रावणो राजा भ्रातरं दीनया गिरा। कुम्भकर्ण निबोध त्वं महत्कष्टमुपस्थितम्।। 51।।
रामेण निहताः शूराः पुत्राः पौत्राश्च बान्धवाः। किं कर्तव्यमिदानीं मे मृत्युकाल उपस्थिते।।52।।

tamāha rāvaṇo rājā bhrātaraṃ dīnayā girā/
kumbhakarṇa nibodha tvaṃ mahatkaṣṭamupasthitam//
rāmeṇa nihatāḥ śūrāḥ putrāḥ prautrāśca bāndhavāḥ/
kiṃ kartavyamidānīṃ me mṛtyukāla upasthite//

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Then king Ravana said most pitifully to his brother, 'Oh Kumbhakarn! Listen (i.e. become aware of the fact that) a great calamitous trouble has presented itself before us (51). Sri Ram has killed our great warriors, sons, grandsons, kith and kin, relatives and compatriots as well as all our friends. The time of my death appears to have come. What should I do now? I am very perplexed and confused, and am unable to decide what to decide what to do. So advise me (52).

एष दाशरथी रामः सुग्रीवसहितो बली। समुद्रं सबलस्तीर्त्वा मूलं नः परिकृन्तति।। 53।।
ये राक्षसा मुख्यतमास्ते हता वानरैर्युधि। वानराणां क्षयं युद्धे न पश्यामि कदाचन।। 54।।

eṣa dāśarathī rāmaḥ sugrīvasahito balī/
samudraṃ sabalastīrtvā mūlaṃ naḥ parikṛntati//
ye rākṣasā mukhyatasmāste hatā vānarairyudhi/
vānarāṇāṃ kṣayaṃ yuddhe na paśyāmi kadācana//

This son of Dashrath, Sri Ram, along with the forces of Sugriv, have crossed the ocean, have surrounded (besieged) us from all the sides, and are nibbling away (i.e. chopping or chiseling away) at our roots[1] (53). All our chief demons (i.e. commanders of the army, chief warriors, etc.) have been killed at the hands of the monkeys, but we are not able to see any reduction in the numbers of the monkeys in the battle field (54).

[Note—[1]That is, we have been surrounded from all sides and Sri Ram is chipping away steadily at our defenses and gradually weakening us. What appeared the other day as an impregnable fortress of Lanka has become most vulnerable to enemy attacks and subsequent conquest. Another point to note is that Ravana has become certain that his end was near.]

नाशयस्व महाबाहो यदर्थं परिबोधितः। भ्रातुरर्थे महासत्त्व कुरु कर्म सुदुष्करम्।। 55।।
श्रुत्वा तद्रावणेन्द्रस्य वचनं परिदेवितम्। कुम्भकर्णो जहासोच्चैर्वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 56।।

nāśayasva mahābāho yadarthaṃ paribodhitaḥ/
bhrāturarthe mahāsattva kuru karma suduṣkaram//
śrutvā tadrāvaṇendrasya vacanaṃ paridevitam/
kumbhakarṇo jahāsoccairvacanaṃ cedamabravīt//

Oh the most valiant and valorous one! You must destroy them—that is why I have woken you up. Oh the great and brave warrior! Do this most daunting and difficult task for the sake of your brother' (55).

Upon hearing these remorseful, gloomy and distressed words of king Ravana, Kumbhakarn burst out laughing derisively. He said (56)—

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पुरा मन्त्रविचारे ते गदितं यन्मया नृप। तदद्य त्वामुपगतं फलं पापस्य कर्मणः।। 57।।
पूर्वमेव मया प्रोक्तो रामो नारायणः परः। सीता च योगमायेति बोधितोऽपि न बुध्यसे।। 58।।

purā mantravicāre te gaditaṃ yanmayā nṛpa/
tadadya tvāmupagataṃ phalaṃ pāpasya karmaṇaḥ//
pūrvameva mayā prokto rāmo nārāyaṇaḥ paraḥ/
sītā ca yogamāyeti bodhito'pi na budhyase//

'Oh king! When you had consulted me earlier, I had told you (advised you) then also—the fruits of your past sins have indeed fructified today (57). I had already told you (warned you, advised you and tried to enlighten you, wisen you up, teach you) that Sri Ram is the supreme Narayan who is beyond everything, and Sita is his Yog Maya (i.e. his cosmic energy of construction and destruction which works under the instructions of the Lord and always stays united with him as an inseparable part of the Lord), but unfortunately you don't seem to understand anything inspite of my trying my best to make you see reason and think rationally (58).

[Note :—Refer to Canto 2, verse no. 5 of this Kand when Ravana had asked his ministers for advise. At that time, Kumbhakarn had given sane advice to Ravana in verse nos. 14-18, but the latter didn't pay heed. Now, Kumbhakarn is referring to it.]

एकदाहं वने सानौ विशालायां स्थितो निशि। दृष्टो मया मुनिः साक्षान्नारदो दिव्यदर्शनः।। 59।।
तमब्रवं महाभाग कुतो गन्तासि मे वद। इत्युक्तो नारदः प्राह देवानां मन्त्रणे स्थितः।। 60।।

ekadāhaṃ vane sānau viśālāyāṃ sthito niśi/
dṛṣṭo mayā muniḥ sākṣānnārado divyadarśanaḥ//
tamabravaṃ mahābhāga kuto gantāsi me vada/
ityukto nāradaḥ prāha devānāṃ mantraṇe sthitaḥ//

One night I was sitting on a large rock in the forest. At that time, I saw (had a divine vision of) the celestial sage Narad himself (59). I said, 'Oh the most lucky and fortunate one! Tell my where are you going now?' When I had asked this, Narad replied, 'I was attending a most confidential meeting of the Gods (60).

तत्रोत्पन्नमुदन्तं ते वक्ष्यामि शृणु तत्त्वतः। युवाभ्यां पीडिता देवाः सर्वे विष्णुमुपागताः।। 61।।
ऊचुस्ते देवदेवेशं स्तुत्वा भक्त्या समाहिताः। जहि रावणमक्षोभ्यं देव त्रैलोक्यकण्टकम्।। 62।।

tatrotpannamudantaṃ te vakṣyāmi śṛṇu tattvataḥ/
yuvābhyāṃ pīḍitā devāḥ sarve viṣṇumupāgatāḥ//

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ūcuste devadeveśaṃ stutvā bhaktyā samāhitāḥ /
jahi rāvaṇamakṣobhyaṃ deva trailokyakaṇṭakam //

Whatever transpired there, I shall tell you verbatim, listen carefully. Being extremely tormented and vexed by you two brothers (Ravana and Kumbhakarn), all the Gods approached Lord Vishnu (to find out a way to end their predicament, consternation and tribulations) (61). They offered prayers to the most exalted supreme Lord of Gods with immense devotion, concentration, submission and dedication. They said, 'Oh Lord! This fellow Ravana has created great miseries for us and we are feeling extremely distressed, dismayed, remorseful, hopeless and hapless. He (Ravana) has become a thorn for the three worlds (the Triloki—the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean world). Hence, do something to eliminate him soon (62).

मानुषेण मृतिस्तस्य कल्पिता ब्रह्मणा पुरा। अतस्त्वं मानुषो भूत्वा जहि रावणकण्टकम्।। 63।।
तथेत्याह महाविष्णुः सत्यसङ्कल्प ईश्वरः। जातो रघुकुले देवो राम इत्यभिविश्रुतः।। 64।।

mānuṣeṇa mṛtistasya kalpitā brahmaṇā purā /
atastvaṃ mānuṣo bhūtvā jahi rāvaṇakaṇṭakam //
tathetyāha mahāviṣṇuḥ satyasaṅkalpa īśvaraḥ /
jāto raghukule devo rāma ityabhiviśrutaḥ //

In an earlier time, the creator Brahma had destined (literally, written, foretold, created, decided, visualised, prescribed and prophesized) his death at the hands of a human. So, you should become a human being and eliminate (destroy) this Ravana-like thorn' (63).

Then the great Vishnu, who is steadfast and true to his words, vows and promises and is the supreme Lord of all, assured them saying 'alright, so be it'. Now the same Lord has revealed himself as an incarnation of Sri Ram in the clan of Raghu (64).

स हनिष्यति वः सर्वानित्युक्त्वा प्रययौ मुनिः। अतो जानीहि रामं त्वं परं ब्रह्म सनातनम्।। 65।।
त्यज वैरं भजस्वाद्य मायामानुषविग्रहम्। भजतो भक्तिभावेन प्रसीदति रघूत्तमः।। 66।।

sa hanişyati vaḥ sarvānityuktvā prayayau muniḥ /
ato jānīhi rāmaṃ tvaṃ paraṃ brahma sanātanam //
tyaja vairaṃ bhajasvādya māyāmānuṣavigraham /
bhajato bhaktibhāvena prasīdati raghūttamaḥ //

He will kill you all'. Saying this, the sage (Narad) went his way. Hence, you must recognise (i.e. realise, be aware of, and wisen up to

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the fact) that Sri Ram is the eternal, truthful and supreme Brahm himself (65), and you must abandon all confrontation, conflict, ill-will, animosity, enmity, hatred, opposition, hostility and belligerence etc. with this manifestation of the same supreme transcendental Lord of creation who is presently in the form of an illusive, deceptive form of a man. You must adore, worship and have devotion for him instead. The most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) becomes pleased with those who worship and adore him with full devotion, reverence, faith, conviction, dedication and submission (66).

भक्तिर्जनित्री ज्ञानस्य भक्तिर्मोक्षप्रदायिनी। भक्तिहीनेन यत्किञ्चित्कृतं सर्वमसत्समम्।।67।।
अवताराः सुबहवो विष्णोर्लीलानुकारिणः। तेषां सहस्रसदृशो रामो ज्ञानमयः शिवः।।68।।
रामं भजन्ति निपुणा मनसा वचसानिशम्। अनायासेन संसारं तीर्त्वा यान्ति हरेः पदम्।।69।।

bhaktirjanitrī jñānasya bhaktirmokṣapradāyinī /
bhaktihīnena yatkiñcitkṛtaṃ sarvamasatsamam //
avatārāḥ subahavo viṣṇorlīlānukāriṇaḥ /
teṣāṃ sahasrasadṛśo rāmo jñānamayaḥ śivaḥ //
rāmaṃ bhajanti nipuṇā manasā vacasāniśam /
anāyāsena saṃsāraṃ tīrtvā yānti hareḥ padam //

Bhakti (sincere devotion, dedication, conviction, faith, submission etc.) is the mother of 'Gyan' (enlightenment, chastening, wisdom and truthful knowledge of reality), and it is the provider of emancipation and salvation. Whatever a person who is devoid of devotion and sincerity does results in futility (it is useless and worthless, and is in vain) (67).

Lord Vishnu had many incarnations and all of them had done playful activities called 'Leela' according to and compatible with that respective form. But this incarnation/manifestation/revelation of Sri Ram is an embodiment of Gyan (enlightenment, wisdom and truthful knowledge of the ultimate reality and essence) and is nothing else but a live image of 'Shiva' (i.e. the Lord is the best, most truthful, eternal, beautiful, enlightened, chastened, sagacious, erudite and wise among all the aspects of creation). Nay, he is equivalent to thousands of such incarnations! (68).

Those who sincerely, most diligently and devotedly worship Sri Ram by involving their mind and heart as well as their speech in it, day and night, are sure to cross this mundane, deluding, entrapping

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and artificial world without any special efforts or taking any great troubles, and they go to the supreme abode of Sri Hari (Vishnu), i.e. they achieve the supreme privilege of attaining liberation and deliverance from the world, and accomplish emancipation and salvation (69).

[Note to verse no. 68 :—Amongst all the incarnations of Lord Vishnu on this earth, the one in the form of Sri Ram is regarded as the best in all respects and parameters of righteousness, uprightness, knowledge, enlightenment, probity, propriety, stature, potent, majesty, auspiciousness, glory, renown and fame, forbearance, steadfastness of purpose etc. He is called a 'personification of Shiva' because of his wisdom, renunciation, dispassion, detachment and enlightenment, and also because he is most truthful, honest and steadfast in all the positive qualities associated with a noble soul. He is most beautiful and possesses all the good, attractive and positive values and virtues that one can possibly ever hope to have or achieve as a man. Sri Ram has never deviated from his path of Dharma. Further, Shiva is called a Mahagyani—the most exalted, sagacious, erudite, knowledgeable, wise, enlightened, self-realised, chastened and an auspicious one amongst the renunciate, dispassionate and enlightened ones. Shiva is always engrossed in meditation, and remains peaceful, tranquil, serene, unperturbed and eternally blissful. So, Sri Ram is called 'Shiva' in all these aspects. He epitomises the best a man can ever expect to be—a perfect human being.]

ये राममेव सततं भुवि शुद्धसत्त्वा ध्यायन्ति तस्य चरितानि पठन्ति सन्तः।
मुक्तास्त एव भवभोगमहाहिपाशैः सीतापतेः पदमनन्तसुखं प्रयान्ति।। 70।।

ye rāmameva satataṃ bhuvi śuddhasattvā
dhyāyanti tasya caritāni paṭhanti santaḥ /
muktāsta eva bhavabhogamahāhipāśaiḥ
sītāpate padamanantasukhaṃ prayānti //

Those pious saints who always concentrate, meditate upon and think of Sri Ram in this bewildering, entrapping, deluding, mundane world with a pure, uncorrupted and honest mind and intellect free of all frauds, deceptions and deceit, and read only about his divine glorious stories—they are the ones who can free themselves from the fetters of this mundane, materialistic, deluding and entrapping world which is like a huge serpent (ready to devour them). As a result, they attain eternally blissful lotus-like feet of Sri Ram, the Lord of Sita (70).

[Note :—Verse nos. 57-70 can be called the gospel of Kumbhakarn.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 8

Slaying of Kumbhakarn

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

कुम्भकर्णवचः श्रुत्वा भ्रुकुटीविकटाननः। दशग्रीवो जगादेदमासनादुत्पतन्निव।।1।।
त्वमानीतो न मे ज्ञानबोधनाय सुबुद्धिमान्। मया कृतं समीकृत्य युध्यस्व यदि रोचते।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

kumbhakarṇaśca vacaḥ śrutvā bhrukuṭīvikaṭānanaḥ /
daśagrīvo jagādedamāsanādutpatanniva //
tvamānito na me jñānabodhanāya subuddhimān /
mayā kṛtaṃ samīkṛtya yudhyasva yadi rocate //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing the words of Kumbhakarn (Canto 7, verse nos. 57-70), the countenance and eyebrows, i.e. the facial expressions and demeanors of Ravana, the one with 10 necks, became very fierce and wrathful. He almost leapt up from his seat in disgust and indignant anger, and said scornfully and sarcastically to his brother (1), 'I know you are very wise, but I have not called you to preach me now. If you like, you can regard my deeds as being correct and in order, and enter the war on my behalf (2).

नोचेद्गच्छ सुषुप्त्यर्थं निद्रा त्वां बाधतेऽधुना। रावणस्य वचः श्रुत्वा कुम्भकर्णो महाबलः।।3।।
रुष्टोऽयमिति विज्ञाय तूर्णं युद्धाय निर्ययौ। स लङ्घयित्वा प्राकारं महापर्वतसन्निभः।।4।।
निर्ययौ नगरात्तूर्णं भीषयन्हरिसैनिकान्। स ननाद महानादं समुद्रमभिनादयन्।।5।।

nocedgaccha suṣuptyarthaṃ nidrā tvāṃ bādhate'dhunā /
rāvaṇasya vacaṃ śrutvā kumbhakarṇo mahābalaḥ //
ruṣṭo'yamiti vijñāya tūrṇaṃ yuddhyāya niryayau /
sa laṅghayitvā prākāraṃ mahāparvatasannibhaḥ //
niryayau nagarāttūrṇaṃ bhīṣayanharisainikān /
sa nanāda mahānādaṃ samudramabhinādayan //

Otherwise go and sleep. You must be tormented by it!' Hearing these sarcastic rebuke and taunting remarks of Ravana, the brave Kumbhakarn (3) realised that he has become very angry, wrathful and annoyed (and he wouldn't listen to any sane advise because his intellect has been eclipsed by his impending death), and so he (Kumbhakarn) set off for the battle front immediately.

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That huge-as-mountain and colossus figure stepped across (4) the ramparts of the walled city and came out on the battle field. [He was so huge that he could not get through the exit gates of the city walls, they were too small for his large body. So he just stepped across them in a giant, Gulliver-like step or leap.] He made a loud, thunderous and reverberating roar which scared the wits out of the entire monkey army. The ocean too rumbled and resounded with the roar (5).

वानरान्कालयामास बाहुभ्यां भक्षयन् रुषा। कुम्भकर्णं तदा दृष्ट्वा सपक्षमिव पर्वतम्।। 6।।
दुदुवुर्वानराः सर्वे कालान्तकमिवाखिलाः। भ्रमन्तं हरिवाहिन्यां मुद्गरेण महाबलम्।। 7।।

vānarānkālayāmāsa bāhubhyāṃ bhakṣayan ruṣā /
kumbhakarṇaṃ tadā dṛṣṭvā sapakṣamiva parvatam //
dudruvurvānarāḥ sarve kālāntakamivākhilāḥ /
bhramantaṃ harivāhinyāṃ mudgareṇa mahābalam //

Then, becoming fiercely angry, he started to destroy and annihilate the monkeys by catching hold of them by his hands and gobbling them wholesale. Kumbhakarn looked like a huge winged mountain (6). [His body resembled the mountain while his arms protruding from his body looked like the outstretched wings of a huge bird. The general appearance was of a huge dinosaur or some other forbidding, horrifying and abominable creature.] All the monkeys began fleeing hither and thither from there in panicky haste just like all the creatures try to escape from the clutches of death-God Yam. He roared, roamed, romped, stomped and rampaged amongst the forces of the monkeys with a very strong dumb-bell in hand as his only weapon (7).

कालयन्तं हरीन्वेगाद्भक्षयन्तं समन्ततः। चूर्णयन्तं मुद्गरेण पाणिपादैरनेकधा।। 8।।
कुम्भकर्णं तदा दृष्ट्वा गदापाणिर्विभीषणः। ननाम चरणं तस्य भ्रातुर्ज्येष्ठस्य बुद्धिमान्।। 9।।

kālayantaṃ harīnvegādbhakṣayantaṃ samantataḥ /
cūrṇayantaṃ mudgareṇa pāṇipādairanekadhā //
kumbhakarṇaṃ tadā dṛṣṭvā gadāpāṇirvibhīṣaṇaḥ /
nanāma caraṇaṃ tasya bhrāturjyeṣṭhasya buddhimān //

Everywhere he was killing the monkeys, swallowing them swiftly, and was crushing, grinding, pounding and thrashing them into pulp under his foot as well as by his fists (8). The wise Vibhishan, who was holding a mace, saw all this. He bowed at the feet of his elder brother (Kumbhakarn to pay his respects) (9).

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विभीषणोऽहं भ्रातुर्मे दयां कुरु महामते। रावणस्तु मया भ्रातर्बहुधा परिबोधितः।। 10।।
सीतां देहीति रामाय रामः साक्षाज्जनार्दनः। न शृणोति च मां हन्तुं खड्गमुद्यम्य चोक्तवान्।। 11।।
धिक् त्वां गच्छेति मां हत्वा पदा पापिभिरावृतः। चतुर्भिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं रामं शरणमागतः।। 12।।

vibhīṣaṇo'haṃ bhrāturme dayāṃ kuru mahāmate/
rāvaṇastu mayā bhrāturbahudhā paribodhitaḥ//
sītāṃ dehīti rāmāya rāmaḥ sākṣājjanārdanaḥ/
na śṛṇoti ca māṃ hantuṃ khaḍgamudyamya coktavān//
dhik tvāṃ gaccheti māṃ hatvā padā pāpibhirāvṛtaḥ/
caturbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ rāmaṃ śaraṇamāgataḥ//

Vibhishan said, 'Oh the wise one! I am your brother Vibhishan. Have mercy on me. Oh brother! I had tried repeatedly to tell and explain to Ravana (10) that he should give Sita back to Sri Ram because he is Janardan (Lord Vishnu) himself personified. But he did not listen to me, and instead he drew his sword to kill me (11). He reproached me most scornfully, scowled at me, saying 'Shame to you, get away from here'. Surrounded by sinful, corrupted and pervert courtiers, he kicked me publicly. Then, accompanied by four ministers, I came to take shelter and seek refuge at the feet of Sri Ram' (12).

तच्छ्रुत्वा कुम्भकर्णोऽपि ज्ञात्वा भ्रातरमागतम्। समालिङ्ग्य च वत्स त्वं जीव रामपदाश्रयात्।। 13।।
कुलसंरक्षणार्थाय राक्षसानां हिताय च। महाभागवतोऽसि त्वं पुरा मे नारदाच्छ्रुतम्।। 14।।

tacchrutvā kumbhakarṇo'pi jñātvā bhrātaramāgatam/
samāliṅgya ca vatsa tvaṃ jīva rāmapadāśrayāt//
kulasaṃrakṣaṇārthāya rākṣasānāṃ hitāya ca/
mahābhāgavato'si tvaṃ purā me nāradācchrutam//

Hearing this and observing that his own brother Vibhishan has come, he embraced him. Kumbhakarn said, 'Oh son! Live long! You have taken the shelter/refuge of Sri Ram's (holy, divine) feet (13), and this you have done with the intention of securing the safety of our race and clan as well as for the welfare of all the demons. On some previous occasion, I had heard from sage Narad that you are a great devotee of the Lord (14).

[Note :—Compare this with how Ravana had treated Vibhishan. This seemingly very innocuous gesture marks a stark difference between Ravana and Kumbhakarn. While the former's mind, intellect and discrimination was completely overshadowed by perversion, evil, unrighteousness, recklessness, pride, ego and ruthless belligerence,

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the latter, though being a demon himself, was more sober, prudent, courteous, wise and cultured in his demeanors and thoughts.]

गच्छ तात ममेदानीं दृश्यते न च किञ्चन। मदीयो वा परो वापि मदमत्तविलोचनः।। 15।।
इत्युक्तोऽश्रुमुखो भ्रातुश्चरणावभिवन्द्य सः। रामपार्श्वमुपागत्य चिन्तापर उपस्थितः।। 16।।

gaccha tāta mamedānīṃ dṛśyate na ca kiñcana/
madīyo vā paro vāpi madamattavilocanaḥ//
ityukto'śrumukho bhrātuścaraṇāvabhivandya saḥ/
rāmapārśvamupāgatya cintāpara upasthitaḥ//

Oh dear! You must go away from my front now for my eyes are rendered wild, insane and intoxicated[1] with madness, arrogance and ruthlessness. I cannot see (differentiate between) who is my own or who is opposed to me (i.e. I can't see who is my friend and who is my foe)' (15). When his brother (Kumbhakarn) had said so, tears[2] (of pity and sympathy, of brotherly affection for a loving and favourable brother who is about to die, of remorse, regret and contrition at being a party to his demise, at old relations gone awry and out of control due to destiny, of the moral dilemma, the paradox, the irony and the predicaments of the situation which has made a loving brother his arch enemy, a situation over which none of the two had any control, and which was aggravated by the fact that Kumbhakarn had showed brotherly love and endearment towards him) welled-up in Vibhishan's eyes. He bowed at his (Kumbhakarn's) feet, and becoming overcome by regret, worries and remorse, he came back and stood before Sri Ram (16).

[Note :—[1]The word 'Mada' (मद) in verse no.15 might also mean haughtiness, pride, ego, dare devilry, bellicosity, recklessness, a desire to crush and crumble all resistance and smash/defeat/trounce the enemy; anger, wrathfulness and vengeance as well as the misplaced conviction that he alone was sufficient to single-handedly decimate the enemy. The reader must note that Kumbhakarn had embarked for the battle without the support of any demon army, or even his own personal body guards; only a mad man would think of doing this, or else he must be intoxicated with over self-confidence so as to become so reckless as to throw prudence to wind.

[2]Verse no. 16 tells us that Vibhishan was worried (चिन्तापर) because he will now have to get Kumbhakarn killed although he had shown so much affection for him. It is a situation which is most damning and morally perplexing that Vibhishan now faces. This filled him with

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abject regret, high contrition, profound remorse and extreme dilemma. He was in a moral fix and most confounded. He regretted that he has to become a party to the cause of death of a loving brother.]

कुम्भकर्णोऽपि हस्ताभ्यां पादाभ्यां पेषयन्हरीन्। चचार वानरीं सेनां कालयन् गन्धहस्तिवत्।। 17।।
दृष्ट्वा तं राघवः क्रुद्धो वायव्यं शस्त्रमादरात्। चिक्षेप कुम्भकर्णाय तेन चिच्छेद रक्षसः।। 18।।
समुद्गरं दक्षहस्तं तेन घोरं ननाद सः। स हस्तः पतितो भूमावनेकानर्दयन्कपीन्।। 19।।

kumbhakarṇo'pi hastābhyāṃ pādābhyāṃ peṣayanharīn /
cacāra vānarīṃ senāṃ kālayan gandhahastivat //
dṛṣṭvā taṃ rāghavaḥ kruddho vāyavyaṃ śastramādarāt /
cikṣepa kumbhakarṇāya tena ciccheda rakṣasaḥ //
samudgaraṃ dakṣahastaṃ tena ghoraṃ nanāda saḥ /
sa hastaḥ patito bhūmāvanekānardayankapīn //

Kumbhakarn roamed around madly, recklessly and unhindered in the monkey army, viciously rampaging and romping through it, ruthlessly stumping, battering, thrashing, grinding and crushing them with his hands and under his feet like he were a death-like wild, arrogant, rogue, intoxicated and crazy elephant (17). Seeing him, Raghav (Sri Ram) became annoyed and angry, and he very carefully shot a special weapon called 'Vayavyastra' (literally a weapon which is shot by invoking the Wind God, and one which blows like and has the strength and thrust of a gale force wind, producing a tornado-like storm) at him. With the help of that weapon, he cut-off (sliced, severed, tore or yanked off) the right arm of the demon (18) which held the dumb-bell. At this, he began shrieking violently and viciously. His arm, which was yanked off, fell on the ground, crushing many monkeys in its wake (19).

पर्यन्तमाश्रिताः सर्वे वानरा भयवेपिताः। रामराक्षसयोर्युद्धं पश्यन्तः पर्यवस्थिताः।। 20।।
कुम्भकर्णश्छिन्नहस्तः शालमुद्यम्य वेगतः। समरे राघवं हन्तुं दुद्राव तमथोऽच्छिनत्।। 21।।

paryantamāśritāḥ sarve vānarā bhayavepitāḥ /
rāmarākṣasayoryudhaṃ paśyantaḥ paryavasthitāḥ //
kumbhakarṇaśchinnahastaḥ śālamudyamya vegataḥ /
samare rāghavaṃ hantuṃ dudrāva tamatho'cchinat //

[The following verses describe the duel between Sri Ram and Kumbhakarn—] Then all the monkeys who were scattered here and there in the battle field, stood aside, stunned, astounded and terrified.

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They watched the duel between Sri Ram and the demon (Kumbhakarn) (20). When his right hand was severed, Kumbhakarn took hold of a Sal tree (in his left hand) and rushed towards Raghav (Sri Ram) to kill him in battle (21).

शालेन सहितं वामहस्तमैन्द्रेण राघवः। छिन्नाबाहुमथायान्तं नर्दन्तं वीक्ष्य राघवः।। 22।।
द्वावर्धचन्द्रौ निशितावादायास्य पदद्वयम्। चिच्छेद पतितौ पादौ लङ्काद्वारि महास्वनौ।।23।।

śālena sahitaṃ vāmahastamaindreṇa rāghavaḥ /
chinnābāhumathāyāntaṃ nardantaṃ vīkṣya rāghavaḥ //
dvāvardhacandrau niśitāvādāyāsya padadvayam /
ciccheda patitau pādau laṅkādvāri mahāsvanau //

But Raghav (Sri Ram) cut-off his left arm holding the Sal Tree using a weapon called 'Indra's weapon'. Inspite of having both his arms severed, he roared and shrieked violently, and lunged fiercely towards Raghav (Sri Ram) (22).

Seeing the demon rushing towards him, Sri Ram mounted two arrows with half-moon like (crescent, sickle shaped) tips and sliced off his two feet. The two legs fell at the gate of Lanka with a tremendous thud (23).

निकृत्तपाणिपादोऽपि कुम्भकर्णोऽतिभीषणः। वडवामुखवद्वक्त्रं व्यादाय रघुनन्दनम्।। 24।।
अभिदुद्राव निनदन्राहुश्चन्द्रमसं यथा। अपूरयच्छिताग्रैश्च सायकैस्तद्रघूत्तमः।।25।।

nikṛttapāṇipādo'pi kumbhakarṇo'tibhīṣaṇaḥ /
vaḍavāmukhavadvaktraṃ vyādāya raghunandanam //
abhidudrāva ninadanrāhuścandramasaṃ yathā /
apūrayacchitāgraiśca sāyakaistadraghūttamaḥ //

Inspite of having his limbs (hands and legs) cut-off, the most ferocious and fierce Kumbhakarn rushed towards Raghunandan (Sri Ram) with a mouth wide open like a wild mare, all the while yelling wildly (24). He appeared like Rahu rushing towards the Moon God to gobble him up. But the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) filled it (i.e. stuffed it) with very sharp arrows (25).

शरपूरितवक्त्रोऽसौ चुक्रोशातिभयङ्करः। अथ सूर्यप्रतीकाशमैन्द्रं शरमनुत्तमम्।। 26।।
वज्राशनिसमं रामश्चिक्षेपासुरमृत्यवे। स तत्पर्वतसङ्काशं स्फुरत्कुण्डलदंष्ट्रकम्।।27।।
चकर्त रक्षोऽधिपतेः शिरो वृतमिवाशनिः। तच्छिरः पतितं लङ्काद्वारि कायो महोदधौ।।28।।

śarapūritavaktro'sau cukrosātibhayaṅkaraḥ /
atha sūryapratīkāśamaindraṃ śaramanuttamam //

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vajrāśanisamaṃ rāmaścikṣepāsuramṛtyave /
sa tatparvatasaṅkāśaṃ sphuratkuṇḍaladaṃṣṭrakam //
cakarta rakṣo'dhipateḥ śiro vṛtramivāśaniḥ /
tacchiraḥ patitaṃ laṅkādvāri kāyo mahodadhau //

When his mouth was stuffed with arrows, the most ferocious and fierce demon began yelling wildly. Then Sri Ram mounted the Indra's arrow which was considered the best amongst them all and which was as dazzling and splendorous as the sun (26). That arrow was sturdy, infallible, invincible, hard and strong as the Vajra (the weapon of Indra, the king of Gods). Sri Ram shot it at the demon to finally kill him (27). That arrow went through his head—which was like a huge mountain, had large ear-rings, and whose jaws had rows of glittering teeth—even as the Vajra of Indra had cut-off the head of the demon Vrittasur in an earlier time. His head fell at the gates of Lanka, while the torso fell in the ocean (28).

शिरोऽस्य रोधयद्द्वारं कायो नक्राद्यचूर्णयत्। ततो देवाः सऋषयो गन्धर्वाः पन्नगाः खगाः ।। 29 ।।
सिद्धा यक्षा गुह्यकाश्च अप्सरोभिश्च राघवम्। ईडिरे कुसुमासारैर्वर्षन्तश्चाभिनन्दिताः ।। 30 ।।

śiro'sya rodhayaddvāraṃ kāyo nakrādyacūrṇayat /
tato devāḥ saṛṣayo gandharvāḥ pannagāḥ khagāḥ //
siddhā yakṣā guhyakāśca apsarobhiśca rāghavam /
īḍire kusumāsārairvarṣantaścābhinantitāḥ //

That head blocked the gate of Lanka, while the torso crushed numerous ocean-dwelling marine creatures and blocked the whirlpools present in it. Seeing the death of Kumbhakarn, the Gods, accompanied by the sages and hermits, the Gandharvas (celestial musicians), the subterranean serpents, the birds (29), the Siddhas (mystics), the Yakshas (a type of semigods), the cave dwellers (e.g. those sages, hermits and ascetics who lived there as opposed to those who lived outside in the forests and the heavens), and the Apsaras (celestial damsels or courtesans of Indra's court) etc., became extremely pleased and happy. They showered flowers over Raghav, sang his glories, and said prayers in his honour (30).

[Note :—Verse nos. 18-29 describe how Kumbhakarn was killed. It was one-to-one duel. No army accompanied the demon, while for the moment even the monkeys had stood aside to watch the awe inspiring and stunning spectacle of the Ram-Kumbhakarn war.]

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आजगाम तदा रामं द्रष्टुं देवमुनीश्वरः। नारदो गगनात्तूर्णं स्वभासा भासयन्दिशः।।31।।
राममिन्दीवरश्याममुदाराङ्गं धनुर्धरम्। ईषत्ताम्रविशालाक्षमैन्द्रास्त्राङ्कितबाहुकम्।।32।।
दयार्द्रदृष्ट्या पश्यन्तं वानराञ्छरपीडितान्। दृष्ट्वा गद्गदया वाचा भक्त्या स्तोतुं प्रचक्रमे।।33।।

ājagāma tadā rāmaṃ draṣṭuṃ devamunīśvaraḥ/
nārado gaganāttūrṇaṃ svabhāsā bhāsayandiśaḥ//
rāmamindīvaraśyāmamudārāṅgaṃ dhanurdharam/
īṣattāmraviśālākṣamaindrāstrāñcitabāhukam //
dayārdradṛṣṭyā paśyantaṃ vānarāñcharapīḍitān/
dṛṣṭvā gadgadayā vācā bhaktyā stotuṃ pracakrame//

Just at that time, the God's sage Narad, who illuminated all the directions with his glowing radiance, came to see (meet) Sri Ram through the path of the sky (31).

Sri Ram—who is dark complexioned (i.e. a blue tinged complexion) like a blue lotus, whose image is most enchanting and enamouringly beautiful, who holds a bow in his hands, whose large and broad eyes are red-hued like copper, and whose arms are adorned by the special weapon called Indrastra (32)—was glancing mercifully, graciously, benevolently and compassionately at the monkeys who were miserable, distressed, tormented and hurt because of being wounded by arrows in the ongoing war. Seeing Sri Ram in the above graceful posture, Narad was overwhelmed with devotion and affection for the Lord, and he prayed to him with an emotionally chocked voice (33).

नारद उवाच

देवदेव जगन्नाथ परमात्मन् सनातन। नारायणाखिलाधार विश्वसाक्षिन्नमोऽस्तु ते।।34।।
विशुद्धज्ञानरूपोऽपि त्वं लोकाननिवञ्चयन्। मायया मनुजाकारः सुखदुःखादिमानिव।।35।।

nārada uvāca

devadeva jagannātha paramātman sanātana/
nārāyaṇākhilādhāra viśvasākṣinnamo'stu te//
viśuddhajñānarūpo'pi tvaṃ lokānativañcayan/
māyayā manujākāraḥ sukhaduḥkhādimāniva//

Narad said, 'Oh God of gods! Oh the Lord of the world! Oh the supreme Soul! Oh the eternal and truthful one! Oh Narayan who is the support, succour, base, strength and essence of all! Oh the witness to the whole universe! I bow most reverentially before you (34).

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You are an image/embodiment of pure knowledge and wisdom, but inspite of that (i.e. though you are enlightened) you assume a human form by employing your deluding (illusion and deception creating) powers called Maya to trick and confuse the world into believing that you are subject to such worldly emotions as happiness and joy, misery and distress etc. like an ordinary human being (35).

त्वं मायया गुह्यमानः सर्वेषां हृदि संस्थितः। स्वयंज्योतिःस्वभावस्त्वं व्यक्त एवामलात्मनाम्।। 36।।
उन्मीलयन् सृजस्येतन्नेत्रे राम जगत्त्रयम्। उपसंह्रियते सर्वं त्वया चक्षुर्निमीलनात्।। 37।।

tvaṃ māyayā guhyamānaṃ sarveṣāṃ hṛdi saṃsthitaḥ /
svayaṃjyotiḥsvabhāvastvaṃ vyakta evāmalātmanām //
unmīlayan sṛjasyetannetre rāma jagattrayam /
upasaṃhriyate sarvaṃ tvayā cakṣurnimīlanāt //

Veiled or covered (i.e. empowered) by your own Maya, you secretly and imperceptibly reside in the heart of all the creatures (as their Atma veiled in ignorance). By nature you are self illuminated, and only those who have a pure, uncorrupted mind-intellect-heart apparatus can ever hope to come face to face with (i.e. experience, witness and recognise) you. You present or reveal yourself and your true identity only before such persons (36).

Oh Sri Ram! Simply by opening your eyes, you can create the entire Triloki (the three worlds), while all of it is annihilated (i.e. brought to an end) by your closing your eyes (37).

यस्मिन्सर्वमिदं भाति यतश्चैतच्चराचरम्। यस्मान्न किञ्चिल्लोकेऽस्मिंस्तस्मै ते ब्रह्मणे नमः।। 38।।
प्रकृतिं पुरुषं कालं व्यक्ताव्यक्तस्वरूपिणम्। यं जानन्ति मुनिश्रेष्ठास्तस्मै रामाय ते नमः।।39।।

yasminsarvamidaṃ bhāti yataścaitaccarācaram /
yasmānna kiñcilloke'sminstasmai te brahmaṇe namaḥ //
prakṛtiṃ puruṣaṃ kālaṃ vyaktāvyaktasvarūpiṇam /
yaṃ jānanti muniśreṣṭhāstasmai rāmāya te namaḥ //

You are the supreme transcendental Brahm in whom the whole animate as well as inanimate world appears to be present, who is the cause of its creation, and there is nothing in this world that excludes you or that has any existence without you. I bow most reverentially before you (38).

The most exalted sages, hermits, ascetics and other wise ones know and recognise you as 'Prakriti'[1], 'Viraat Purush'[2], 'Kaal'[3] and 'Vyakta'[4]

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as well as 'Avyakta'[5]. Oh Sri Ram, I most reverentially bow before you (39).

[Note—[1]Prakriti—The word basically means 'nature' with all its connotations. The Chambers dictionary defines it as the power that creates and regulates the world; the power of growth; the established order of things; the cosmos; the external world especially that untouched by man; the inherent qualities in anything that makes it what it is; the essence; the being; the constitution; a kind or order; naturalness; normal feeling; conformity to truth or reality; the inborn mind; the character, instinct or disposition; the vital power; the course of life; the nakedness of truth; the primitive undomesticated condition; the strength or substance of anything; a deity personifying some force of physical nature.

Sir Monier Monier-Williams, in his encyclopedic Sanskrit-English dictionary describes it thus—'making or placing before or at first'.

The word Prakriti has many connotations, viz. the original or natural or basic form or condition of anything; the original or primary nature, character, condition, constitution, temperament, disposition; the fundamental form or shape or essence or pattern or standard or model, rule; Mother Nature which has the active physical natural forces that are responsible for unfolding the creation, its sustenance and annihilation; something that is inherent, innate, genuine, unaltered, unadulterated, basic, normal, bare, naked, crude, integral and stripped of all pretensions;

The word Prakriti also refers to the powers of the Supreme Being personified as Mother Nature in whose womb the entire creation has revealed itself. It is deified forces of Nature and renowned as different Goddesses. As inherent nature and temperament of a creature, it determines the way the world behaves and thinks. The Prakriti is the primary female aspect of creation and is known as Shakti, while its male aspect is known as the Viraat Purush. The Shakti is the active ingredient or force that creates and regulates everything, while the primary entity or Being whose will this Shakti is implementing is called Brahm who remains passive.

According to the Purans, this Prakriti or Nature has been personified as different Goddesses, while Brahm has been known as Viraat Purush in the terminology of Vedanta or the Upanishads, and Vishnu in the Purans. The Shakti is the female aspect of Purush, and is considered as inseparable from him; in fact they are two halves of the same Brahm. In order to create, Brahm revealed himself in these two primary forces which revealed themselves as the cosmos or Nature. As the different inherent tendencies of a creature, the forces of creation came to be known as Sattva, Raj and Tam which determines and regulates the continuous cycle of creation, sustenance and conclusion.

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[2]Viraat Purush—According to Vedanta, the Viraat is the sum total of all the gross bodies in the creation at the macrocosmic level. The individual gross body of the creature is the microcosmic form of that Viraat, because the entire creation is a manifestation of the same Viraat, it is an image of Viraat. According to the Purans, Viraat is known as Lord Vishnu. Since the Viraat is the male aspect of creation and the primary source of life, Vishnu is also regarded as the creator as well as the sustainer of the creation. But since Vishnu, as Viraat Purush, is the macrocosmic gross body of Brahm, the supreme transcendental Being, he is also regarded as being synonymous with Brahm. The entire universe has been created by Vishnu's passive powers using Shakti as its active power and partner.

[3]Kaal is a personification of the forces of creation that cause death or conclusion of an entity. In other words, it is death personified. Since the Lord is not only responsible for creation but also its conclusion, he is called Kaal. The deification of this force is in the form of Lord Shiva. Since death is a part and parcel of the process of creation and it has been conceived to maintain equilibrium in the system, Kaal is also a form of Brahm in its capacity as the concluder of creation.

[4]Vyakta—It means that which is manifest, apparent, clear, articulate, tangible, categorical. Therefore, when this word is used for the Supreme Being or Brahm, it implies that aspect of the cosmic transcendental Being that is clearly visible and perceptible, that can be known and described and comprehended. The various incarnations of the Viraat Purush, also known as Vishnu, come under this category because it is possible to describe his life and enumerate his characters, virtues and qualities. The 'Vyakta' form has a known and tangible form, a particular shape, a specific name, a known history, renowned attributes, and a categorical existence that is visible and physically verified and witnessed.

[5]Avyakta—This is the opposite of Vyakta (see s.no.39). It is that aspect of an entity that is un-manifest, un-discernible, un-known, imperceptible, un-apparent, inarticulate and intangible. This entity has no attributes, no name, no shape, no form, no definitions, no titles, no honours, no clarity of how it looks, how it exists, how it works and carries out its functions, how it is empowered and what are its powers and potentials, except that it is all pervading, all encompassing, almighty, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, majestic, enlightened, a fount of light, the controller of everything, and the cause of origin, of sustenance and of conclusion of all that exists in the creation. This entity is known as the supreme transcendental Brahm in the Vedas and the Upanishads.]

विकाररहितं शुद्धं ज्ञानरूपं श्रुतिर्जगौ। त्वां सर्वजगदाकारमूर्त्तिं चाप्याह सा श्रुतिः ॥40॥
विरोधो दृश्यते देव वैदिको वेदवादिनाम्। निश्चयं नाधिगच्छन्ति त्वत्प्रसादं विना बुधाः ॥41॥

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vikārarahitaṃ śuddhaṃ jñānarūpaṃ śrutirjagau /
tvāṃ sarvajagadākāramūrtiṃ cāpyāha sā śrutiḥ //
virodho dṛśyate deva vaidiko vedavādinām /
niścayaṃ nādhigacchanti tvatprasādaṃ vinā budhāḥ //

The Vedas have proclaimed and honoured you as being without any shortcomings, blemishes, taints or faults, as being pure, holy, uncorrupted and untarnished in any way, and as being an image, an embodiment and a personification of true knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. The same Vedas tell that you are an image of this whole creation (or conversely, this whole creation is but only your manifestation or image) (40).

Oh Lord! In this manner, those who doubt (or debate, or oppose) the veracity of Vedas see conflict in these words (or versions, descriptions, maxims, tenets or assertions) of the Vedas[1]. But, without your grace, even the most wise and knowledgeable ones cannot reach any definite conclusion or arrive at a certain decision at all (41).

[Note—[1]The two opposite versions mentioned here pertains to the 'Avyakta' and the 'Vyakta' forms of the same entity which seems impossible on the face of it. These apparently varying versions lead to schism and dichotomy, and create the notion of duality. When on the one hand the Vedas say that Brahm is eternal, imperishable, infinite, non-divisible and immutable as well as invisible, imperceptible, un-manifest, without attributes and forms, they seem to contradict their own versions when they say that this world, which has all the opposite characters, in a manifestation of Brahm. But this is an erroneous interpretation of the truthful Vedas—because they also say that Brahm is synonym with Atma and it is the Atma that is the truthful form of the creation. If one does not understand what is Atma, and accuses the Vedas of saying contradicting things, then it is up to the person to realise that he is under illusions and misconceptions.]

मायया क्रीडतो देव न विरोधो मनागपि। रश्मिजालं रवेर्यद्वदद्दृश्यते जलवद् भ्रमात्।। 42 ।।
भ्रान्तिज्ञानात्तथा राम त्वयि सर्वं प्रकल्प्यते। मनसोऽविषयो देव रूपं ते निर्गुणं परम्।। 43 ।।

māyayā krīḍato deva na virodho manāgapi /
raśmijālaṃ raveryadvaddṛśyate jalavad bhramāt //
bhrāntijñānāttathā rāma tvayi sarvaṃ prakalpyate /
manaso'viṣayo deva rūpaṃ te nirguṇaṃ param //

Oh Lord! You are acting in the way you do by using your illusion creating powers of Maya (like a maverick magician does by employing

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his hypnotic powers to conjure up images that have no substance, but they nevertheless hold his audience in thrall). Hence, there is no ambiguity, contradiction or opposition in these words of the Vedas. Even as the rays of the sun create an illusion of water (here, a reference is made to the mirage seen on a hot day in the desert) (42), this world too is mistakenly and erroneously treated as being your image, or conversely, that you are an embodiment of the world (i.e. either that this world is your reflection or that the whole world is contained in you). Your actual 'Nirgun' aspect is formless, is without any attributes, titles and honours, has a supreme existence beyond the reach of the senses, and is a subject that is beyond the grasp and comprehension of the mind and intellect (i.e. they cannot understand, debate, discuss or contemplate about it) (43).

कथं दृश्यं भवेद्देव दृश्याभावे भजेत्कथम्। अतस्तवावतारेषु रूपाणि निपुणा भुवि ।। 44 ।।
भजन्ति बुद्धिसम्पन्नास्तरन्त्येव भवार्णवम्। कामक्रोधादयस्तत्र बहवः परिपन्थिनः ।। 45 ।।

kathaṃ dṛśyaṃ bhaveddeva dṛśyābhāve bhajetkatham /
atastavāvatāreṣu rūpāṇi nipuṇā bhuvi //
bhajanti buddhisampannāstarantyeva bhavārṇavam /
kāmakrodhādayastatra bahavaḥ paripanthinaḥ //

Oh Lord! How can 'that' (Nirgun aspect of God) be visible to any one? And since it (Brahm) is not visible, how can one worship, adore, honour or have devotion for it (for it is so abstract and beyond understanding and comprehension)?

Therefore, wise and expert persons concentrate their attention and focus their mind on (i.e. worship, adore, dedicate themselves to and have devotion for) your 'Sagun' form (i.e. the form that is visible and has different attributes which can be easily verified, understood and seen) that you, who are the supreme transcendental Brahm, have adopted during your incarnation on this earth. This visible form makes the task of honouring and worshipping you as an embodiment of the stellar virtues and qualities lauded and prescribed by the Vedas, of following the path shown by the Vedas that you embody, so much the easier (44).

By being thus blessed with enlightenment, knowledge of reality and wisdom in this easy way, they are able to cross over this mundane, measureless and ensnaring world which is like a vast intractable ocean. There are many obstacles and hindrances in this path, such as Kaam

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(worldly desires, passions, lust, wistfulness and avarice) and Krodh (various agitations of the mind leading to anger, wrath, vengeance and tempest) etc. (45).

भीषयन्ति सदा चेतो मार्जारा मूषकं यथा। त्वन्नाम स्मरतां नित्यं त्वद्रूपमपि मानसे।। 46।।
त्वत्पूजानिरतानां ते कथामृतपरात्मनाम्। त्वद्भक्तसङ्गिनां राम संसारो गोष्पदायते।। 47।।

bhīṣayanti sadā ceto mārjārā mūṣakaṃ yathā /
tvannāma smaratāṃ nityaṃ tvadrūpamapi mānase //
tvatpūjāniratānāṃ te kathāmṛtaparātmanām /
tvadbhaktasaṅgināṃ rāma saṃsāro goṣpadāyate //

These obstacles constantly and severely agitate and torment the mind and intellect, creating constant consternation and grave fears, just like a cat terrifies the mouse. By constantly and persistently remembering your name, meditating upon your divine form in one's heart (46), involving oneself in worshipping, honouring and adoring you sincerely and industriously, hearing the nectar-like divine stories of the Supreme Being or supreme Lord that you personify, and having communion and interaction with your honest devotees and followers—oh Sri Ram, by adopting any of these methods, a person finds this mundane world, which is otherwise as vast and un-crossable as an intractable ocean, to be as small and easily crossable as a hole made on the earth by a cow's hoof. (47).

[Note :—The hollow or shallow hole or depression made in the soft mud or earth due to the pressure of a cow's hoof is of a very small dimension, both in terms of area and depth. It can contain very small amount of water and is tiny in size. A man can easily step across it without any effort at all. This is a metaphor to emphasize the fact that by adopting any one of the methods prescribed above, a person can get over this huge ocean-like world as easily as if he were crossing the water collected in that hollowed out earth made from a cow's hoof.]

अतस्ते सगुणं रूपं ध्यात्वाहं सर्वदा हृदि। मुक्तश्चरामि लोकेषु पूज्योऽहं सर्वदैवतैः।। 48।।
राम त्वया महत्कार्यं कृतं देवहितेच्छया। कुम्भकर्णवधेनाद्य भूभारोऽयं गतः प्रभो।। 49।।

ataste saguṇaṃ rūpaṃ dhyātvāhaṃ sarvadā hṛdi /
muktaścarāmi lokeṣu pūjyo'haṃ sarvadaivataiḥ //
rāma tvayā mahatkāryaṃ kṛtaṃ devahitecchayā /
kumbhakarṇavadhenādya bhūbhāro'yaṃ gataḥ prabho //

That is why, I always concentrate, remember and meditate upon

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your Sagun form (as Sri Ram, the incarnation) in my heart, and being thereby liberated as a consequence of doing so from this deluding, mundane, artificial and entrapping mortal world characterized by life and death, I roam about fearlessly in all the worlds and am also honoured, respected and worshipped by all the Gods wherever I go (48).

Oh Sri Ram! You have done a great deed with the intention of doing well of the Gods. Oh Lord! By the slaying of Kumbhakarn, quite a lot of the burden of the earth has been removed (49).

[Note—Verse no.34-48 can be called the gospel of Narad.]

श्वो हनिष्यति सौमित्रिरिन्द्रजेतारमाहवे। हनिष्यसेऽथ राम त्वं परश्वो दशकन्धरम्।। 50।।
पश्यामि सर्वं देवेश सिद्धैः सह नभोगतः। अनुगृह्णीष्व मां देव गमिष्यामि सुरालयम्।। 51।।
इत्युक्त्वा राममामन्त्र्य नारदो भगवानृषिः। ययौ देवैः पूज्यमानो ब्रह्मलोकमकल्मषम्।। 52।।

śvo hanişyati saumitririndrajetāramāhave/
hanişyase'tha rāma tvaṃ paraśvo daśakandharam//
paśyāmi sarvaṃ deveśa siddhaiḥ saha nabhogataḥ/
anugṛhṇīṣva māṃ deva gamişyāmi surālayam//
ityuktvā rāmamāmantrya nārado bhagavānṛşiḥ/
yayau devaiḥ pūjyamāno brahmalokamakalmaşam//

Tomorrow the son of Sumitra (Laxman) will kill Indrajeet (Meghnad) while you, oh Sri Ram, will slay the 10-headed one (Ravana) day after tomorrow (50). Oh Lord of the Gods! I shall station myself along with other Siddhas (mystics) in the sky and watch the entire proceedings from there. Oh Lord! Have your grace upon me. Now I take your leave, and am going to the heaven which is the abode of Gods' (51).

Saying this, the great sage Narad obtained the permission of Sri Ram, and after being honoured and worshipped by the Gods, he went to the sinless and faultless, the pure and uncorrupt abode of Brahm (52).

[Note :—Verse no. 50 very clearly shows that the three chief demons—Kumbhakarn, Meghnad and Ravana—were killed on three successive days. Given the fact that Canto 5 deals with the 1st day, Canto 6 with 2nd day and Canto 8 with the 3rd day of the war (Kumbhakarn's death), it is apparent that the entire war lasted for 3+2 = 5 days approximately. Or, at the most, for 7 days. The revival of the monkey army in Canto 5 was not on the 1st day but in early morning of the 2nd day for reasons described

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herein below. Laxman was wounded on the 2nd day and revived early 3rd day morning. Kumbhakarn plunges into battle on the 3rd day itself as in Canto 8. Then the next two days were spent in killing Meghnad and Ravana respectively. Therefore, total no. of days = 3+2 = 5 days.

If we regard that the monkey army was revived in the noon on the 1st day itself (Canto 5, verse nos. 72-74), then as the natural sequence of events indicate, Laxman was wounded during the pre-dusk hours of the 1st day itself (Canto 6, verse nos. 8-9), thereby reducing the total no. of days by one day. But this seems untenable because the herbs on the Dronachal mountain were effective only during the early morning (pre-dawn) hours of the night. So the revival of the monkeys in Canto 5, verse nos. 71-74 must have taken place in the early morning hours, before sun rise, of the 2nd day of battle. So the figure of 5-6 days seems most nearest to the actual no. of days the war might have been fought. The only variation might be the conjecture that Hanuman was sent to bring the herb by Sri Ram for the revival of the monkeys on the 2nd day and not on the 1st day of war. If this is the case, then the total number of days is extended by one, totaling to 5+1 = 6 days. Please also see Canto 9, verse no. 57.]

भ्रातरं निहतं श्रुत्वा कुम्भकर्णं महाबलम्। रावणः शोकसन्तप्तो रामेणाक्लिष्टकर्मणा।। 53।।
मूर्च्छितः पतितो भूमावुत्थाय विललाप ह। पितृव्यं निहतं श्रुत्वा पितरं चातिविह्वलम्।। 54।।
इन्द्रजित्प्राह शोकार्तं त्यज शोकं महामते। मयि जीवति राजेन्द्र मेघनादे महाबले।। 55।।
दुःखस्यावसरः कुत्र देवान्तक महामते। व्येतु ते दुःखमखिलं स्वस्थो भव महीपते।। 56।।

bhrātaraṃ nihataṃ śrutvā kumbhakarṇaṃ mahābalam /
rāvaṇaḥ śokasaṃtapto rāmeṇākliṣṭakarmaṇā //
mūrchitaḥ patito bhumāvutthāya vilalāpa ha /
pitṛvyaṃ nihataṃ śrutvā pitaraṃ cātivihvalam //
indrajitprāha śokārtaṃ tyaja śokaṃ mahāmate /
mayi jīvati rājendra meghanāde mahābale //
duḥkhasyāvasaraḥ kutra devāntaka mahāmate /
vyetu te duḥkhamakhilaṃ svastho bhava mahīpate //

Hearing that his brother, the most valiant and valorous Kumbhakarn, had died at the hands of Sri Ram who does (or is capable of doing) the most daunting and formidably difficult of tasks most easily, Ravana became overwhelmed with grief and sorrows (53).

He was so shocked that he fainted and fell on the ground. When he regained consciousness, he wailed, grieved and mournfully lamented (for his brother). Hearing that his uncle was killed and his

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father was overcome by grief and remorse (54), Indrajeet (Meghnad) said to his grieving and mourning father, 'Oh the great one! Give up regretting and lamenting in this meek way! Oh king of kings! When I, the most valiant and valorous Meghnad, am still alive (55), where is the cause for any regrets, hopelessness, lamentations, worries, sorrows, distresses, despair and dejections? Oh the most wise one who is the terminator of Gods as well as is the Lord of the earth! Give up such despairing as well as sorrows and lamentations, and be at peace and become calm (56).

सर्वं समीकरिष्यामि हनिष्यामि च वै रिपून्। गत्वा निकुम्भिलां सद्यस्तर्पयित्वा हुताशनम्।। 57।।
लब्ध्वा रथादिकं तस्मादजेयोऽहं भवाम्यरेः। इत्युक्त्वा त्वरितं गत्वा निर्दिष्टं हवनस्थलम्।।58।।

sarvam samīkariṣyāmi haniṣyāmi ca vai ripūn/
gatvā nikumbhilāṃ sadyastarpayitvā hutāśanam//
labdhvā rathādikaṃ tasmādajeyo'haṃ bhavāmyareḥ/
ityuktvā tvaritaṃ gatvā nirdiṣṭaṃ havanasthalam//

I shall set everything in order soon; I shall surely kill the enemy. Presently, I am going to a cave called Nikumbhila. There I shall perform a fire sacrifice to please the Fire God (57) and obtain a war chariot and other war paraphernalia. This will make me invincible for the enemy'. Saying this, he went to the designated place for the fire sacrifice (58).

रक्तमाल्याम्बरधरो रक्तगन्धानुलेपनः। निकुम्भिलास्थले मौनी हवनायोपचक्रमे।। 59।।
विभीषणोऽथ तच्छ्रुत्वा मेघनादस्य चेष्टितम्। प्राह रामाय सकलं होमारम्भं दुरात्मनः।।60।।

raktamālyāmbaradharo raktagandhānulepanaḥ/
nikumbhilāsthale maunī havanāyopacakrame//
vibhīṣaṇo'tha tacchrutvā meghanādasya ceṣṭitam/
prāha rāmāya sakalaṃ homārambhaṃ durātmanaḥ//

At that place of a goddess called Nikumbhila, he put on a blood-coloured red cloth, wore a similar red-coloured garland, and smeared a paste of sandalwood kneaded with blood on his body. Then he started to perform the fire sacrifice to appease her (i.e. goddess Nikumbhila) (59).

When Vibhishan came to know about all this, he informed Sri Ram about the start of the fire sacrifice by the rascal and evil fellow (60).

[Note :—See also Canto 10, verse nos. 7-13 and its footnote.]

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समाप्यते चेद्धोमोऽयं मेघनादस्य दुर्मतेः। तदाजेयो भवेद्राम मेघनादः सुरासुरैः।।61।।
अतः शीघ्रं लक्ष्मणेन घातयिष्यामि रावणिम्। आज्ञापय मया सार्धं लक्ष्मणं बलिनां वरम्।
हनिष्यति न सन्देहो मेघनादं तवानुजः।।62।।

samāpyate ceddhomo'yaṃ meghanādasya durmateḥ/
tadājeyo bhavedrāma meghanādaḥ surāsuraiḥ//
ataḥ śībhraṃ lakṣmaṇena ghātayiṣyāmi rāvaṇim/
ājñāpaya mayā sārdhaṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ balināṃ varam/
haniṣyati na sandeho meghanādaṃ tavānujaḥ//

Vibhishan said, 'If the fire sacrifice of this wicked, evil and pervert Meghnad is completed without creating any hindrance, then he wouldn't be conquered either by the Gods or by the non-Gods (61). Hence, I shall get this son of Ravana killed soon by Laxman. Order Laxman, who is the best among the brave and strong warriors, to accompany me (to the site of the fire sacrifice). There is no doubt that your younger brother (Laxman) shall surely kill Meghnad' (62).

श्रीराम उवाच

अहमेवागमिष्यामि हन्तुमिन्द्रजितं रिपुम्। आग्नेयेन महास्त्रेण सर्वराक्षसघातिना।।63।।
विभीषणोऽपि तं प्राह नासावन्यैर्निहन्यते। यस्तु द्वादश वर्षाणि निद्राहारविवर्जितः।।64।।
तेनैव मृत्युर्निर्दिष्टो ब्रह्मणास्य दुरात्मनः। लक्ष्मणस्तु अयोध्याया निर्गम्यायात्त्वया सह।।65।।
तदादि निद्राहारादीन्न जानाति रघूत्तम। सेवार्थं तव राजेन्द्र ज्ञातं सर्वमिदं मया।।66।।

śrīrāma uvāca

ahamevāgamiṣyāmi hantumindrajitaṃ ripum/
āgneyena mahāstreṇa sarvarākṣasaghātinā//
vibhīṣaṇo'pi taṃ prāha nāsāvanyairnihanyate/
yastu dvādaśa varṣāṇi nidrāhāravivarjitaḥ//
tenaiva mṛtyurnirdiṣṭo brahmaṇāsya durātmanaḥ/
lakṣmaṇastu ayodhyāyā nirgamyāyāttvayā saha//
tadādi nidrāhārādīnna jānāti raghūttama/
sevārthaṃ tava rājendra jñātaṃ sarvamidaṃ mayā//

Sri Ram said, 'I shall go myself to kill my enemy with the formidable weapon called 'Agneyen'' (63).

Then Vibhishan objected, saying 'This demon cannot be killed by anyone else. A person who has forsaken any food and sleep for continuous twelve years (64) can only kill him. Such a death has been

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fixed (destined) for this wicked fellow by Brahma. Ever since he has left Ayodhya to accompany you, the most exalted of the Raghus (Laxman) has not known (i.e. has not been aware of, or simply has not availed of) food or sleep at all because he was fully preoccupied in serving you. Oh King of kings! I know all these things (65-66).

तदाज्ञापय देवेश लक्ष्मणं त्वरया मया। हनिष्यति न सन्देहः शेषः साक्षाद्धराधरः।। 67।।
त्वमेव साक्षाज्जगतामधीशो नारायणो लक्ष्मण एव शेषः।
युवां धराभारनिवारणार्थं जातौ जगन्नाटकसूत्रधारौ।।68।।

tadājñāpaya deveśa lakṣmaṇaṃ tvarayā mayā/
haniṣyati na sandehaḥ śeṣaḥ sākṣāddharādharaḥ//
tvameva sākṣājjagatāmadhīśo nārāyaṇo lakṣmaṇa eva śeṣaḥ/
yuvāṃ dharābhāranivāraṇārthaṃ jātau jagannāṭakasūtradhārau//

Hence, oh the Lord of Gods! Instruct Laxman to come along with me immediately. He is the legendary Sheshnath, the bearer of the earth, personified. There is no doubt that he will kill him (Meghnad) (67). You are the truthful personification of Narayan, the Lord of the world himself, and Laxman is the legendary Sheshnath. Both of you are the so-called 'masters of the ring', the all powerful controller and the skilled puppeteer of this world-like drama (a theatre or play). You have taken birth to remove the burden of this world. (I know all this!) (68).

[Note :—A remarkable aspect of Adhyatma Ramayan is that all the chief demons who came in contact with Sri Ram were aware of his true identity. Whatever they did was done willingly as a means of attaining salvation. Perhaps Meghnad is the only exception. Perhaps also it is the reason that Sri Ram sent Laxman to slay him and did not kill him himself because only those who are wise and realise the supreme Truth are eligible for emancipation and salvation. Death at the hands of Laxman was a far cry from death at the hands of Lord himself. Laxman was Seshnath, the legendary serpent who spews fire and brimstone at the time of doomsday, and getting killed by him is also a form of liberation because his wrath would scorch the evil body and reduce it to complete ash, leaving no residue. After all, this is symbolic of getting all sins burnt and one getting purified by the test of fire. Meghnad was so horribly sinful that he did not deserve the noble death at the hands of the Lord. His body was so gravely sinful that it needed to be completely destroyed and reduced to a powder. So Sri Ram sent Laxman, the incarnation of Seshnath, to do what was needed to be done.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 9

Slaying of Meghnad

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा रामो वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्। जानाति तस्य रौद्रस्य मायां कृत्स्नां विभीषण।।1।।
स हि ब्रह्मास्त्रविच्छूरो मायावी च महाबलः। जानामि लक्ष्मणस्यापि स्वरूपं मम सेवनम्।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā rāmo vākyamathābravīt /
jānāmi tasya raudrasya māyāṃ kṛtsnāṃ vibhīṣaṇaḥ //
sa hi brahmāstravicchūro māyāvī ca mahābalaḥ /
jānāmi lakṣmaṇasyāpi svarūpaṃ mama sevanam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing these words of Vibhishan, Sri Ram said, 'Oh Vibhishan! I know all about the deceitful, fierce, evil, formidable, abominable and illusive deeds and tricks of this fellow (Meghnad) (1). He knows how to use Brahmastra (a special weapon given by Brahma, the creator, and it is considered infallible and invincible), is very illusive and full of deceit and cunning tricks, is very valiant and valorous as well as very strong, potent and powerful. I am also aware of how Laxman serves me (i.e. I am conscious of the fact that Laxman has been surviving without food and sleep, and has been very diligent and serious in serving me) (2).

ज्ञात्वैवासमहं तूष्णीं भविष्यत्कार्यगौरवात्। इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणं प्राह रामो ज्ञानवतां वरः।।3।।
गच्छ लक्ष्मण सैन्येन महता जहि रावणिम्। हनूमत्प्रमुखैः सर्वैर्यूथपैः सह लक्ष्मण।।4।।

jñātvaivāsamahaṃ tūṣṇīṃ bhaviṣyatkāryagauravāt /
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha rāmo jñānavatāṃ varaḥ //
gaccha lakṣmaṇa sainyena mahatā jahi rāvaṇim /
hanūmatpramukhaiḥ sarvairyūthapaiḥ saha lakṣmaṇa //

Though I know everything, I had not disclosed them considering the difficulty of the task at hand'.

Having said this, Sri Ram, who is the superior most amongst the wise, sagacious and knowledgeable ones, turned to Laxman and instructed him (3), 'Go Laxman! Take along the army of monkeys with you, besides Hanuman and all other chieftains (commanders), and kill the son of Ravana (Meghnad) (4).

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[Note :—Sri Ram did not wish to disclose the fact that Laxman had not eaten or slept for 14 years because otherwise Meghnad would be warned, and he would not face him at all and consequentially will remain alive.]

जाम्बवानृक्षराजोऽयं सह सैन्येन संवृतः। विभीषणश्च सचिवैः सह त्वामभियास्यति।।5।।
अभिज्ञस्तस्य देशस्य जानाति विवराणि सः। रामस्य वचनं श्रुत्वा लक्ष्मणः सविभीषणः।।6।।
जग्राह कार्मुकं श्रेष्ठमन्यद्भीमपराक्रमः। रामपादाम्बुजं स्पृष्ट्वा हृष्टः सौमित्रिरब्रवीत्।।7।।

jāmbavānṛkṣarājo'yaṃ saha sainyena saṃvṛtaḥ /
vibhīṣaṇaśca sacivaiḥ saha tvāmabhiyāsyati //
abhijñastasya deśasya jānāti vivarāṇi saḥ /
rāmasya vacanaṃ śrutvā lakṣmaṇaḥ savibhīṣaṇaḥ //
jagrāha kārmukaṃ śreṣṭhamanyadbhīmaparākramaḥ /
rāmapādāmbujaṃ spṛṣṭvā hṛṣṭaḥ saumitrirabravīt //

Jamvant, the chief of the bears, will accompany you with his army of bears, and Vibhishan with his group of ministers will also go along (5). (I am sending Vibhishan because—) Vibhishan is well acquainted with him (Meghnad) (hence, he will help you to identify him) and he knows all the places where he can possibly hide—he has all the required information'. Hearing the words (commands) of Sri Ram, Laxman—who is the most valiant, valorous, victorious and famous warrior amongst his peers—lifted his second excellent and mighty bow, and accompanied by Vibhishan, he touched the lotus-like holy feet of Sri Ram. Then the son of Sumitra (Laxman) said most cheerfully (6-7)—

अद्य मत्कार्मुकान्मुक्ताः शरा निर्भिद्य रावणिम्। गमिष्यन्ति हि पातालं स्नातुं भोगवतीजले।।8।।
एवमुक्त्वा स सौमित्रिः परिक्रम्य प्रणम्य तम्। इन्द्रजिन्निधनाकाङ्क्षी ययौ त्वरितविक्रमः।।9।।

adya matkārmukānmuktāḥ śarā nirbhidya rāvaṇim /
gamiṣyanti hi pātālaṃ snātuṃ bhogavatījale //
evamuktvā sa saumitriḥ parikramya praṇamya tam /
indrajinnidhanākāṅkṣī yayau tvaritavikramaḥ //

'Today, the arrows shot from my bow shall pierce and pass through the body of the son of Ravana and then shall go to the subterranean world to take a bath (i.e. dip themselves) in the waters of the river Bhogwati. [This river is known as the subterranean Ganges]' (8).

Saying this, the son of Sumitra (Laxman) circumambulated and bowed before him (Sri Ram), and then swiftly went with a firm determination, eagerness and desire to kill Indrajeet (Meghnad) (9).

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वानरैर्बहुसाहस्रैर्हनूमान्पृष्ठतोऽन्वगात्। विभीषणश्च सहितो मन्त्रिभिस्त्वरितं ययौ।। 10।।
जाम्बवत्प्रमुखा ऋक्षाः सौमित्रिं त्वरयान्वयुः। गत्वा निकुम्भिलादेशं लक्ष्मणो वानरैः सह।। 11।।
अपश्यद्बलसङ्घातं दूरादाक्षससङ्कुलम्। धनुरायम्य सौमित्रिर्यत्तोभूद्भूरिविक्रमः।। 12।।

vānarairbahusāhasrairhanūmānpṛṣṭhato'nvagāt /
vibhīṣaṇaśca sahito mantribhistvaritaṃ yayau //
jāmbavatpramukhā ṛkṣāḥ saumitriṃ tvarayānvayuḥ /
gatvā nikumbhilādeśaṃ lakṣmaṇo vānaraiḥ saha //
apaśyadbalasaṅghātaṃ dūrādrākṣasasaṅkulam /
dhanurāyamya saumitriryatto'bhūdbhūrivikramaḥ //

Behind him followed Hanuman with thousands of monkeys, and Vibhishan with his ministers (10). Besides them, Jamvant and other bears also accompanied the son of Sumitra (Laxman) for the mission. At the moment when Laxman reached the place of goddess Nikumbhi along with the monkeys (11), he saw from a distance a huge army of demons collected there (to protect Meghnad's fire sacrifice). Then the most valorous and powerful son of Sumitra (Laxman) stringed and readied his bow (12).

अङ्गदेन च वीरेण जाम्बवान् राक्षसाधिपः। तदा विभीषणः प्राह सौमित्रिं पश्य राक्षसान्।। 13।।
यदेतद्राक्षसानीकं मेघश्यामं विलोक्यते। अस्यानीकस्य महतो भेदने यत्नवान् भव।। 14।।
राक्षसेन्द्रसुतोऽप्यस्मिन् भिन्ने दृश्यो भविष्यति। अभिद्रवाशु यावद्वै नैतत्कर्म समाप्यते।। 15।।

aṅgadena ca vīreṇa jāmbavān rākṣasādhipaḥ /
tadā vibhīṣaṇaḥ prāha saumitriṃ paśya rākṣasān //
yadetadrākṣasānīkaṃ meghaśyāmaṃ vilokyate /
asyānīkasya mahato bhedane yatnavān bhava //
rākṣasendrasuto'pyasmin bhinne dṛśyo bhaviṣyati /
abhidravāśu yāvadvai naitatkarma samāpyate //

Along with him, Angad and the brave Jamvant too became alert. Then the king of demons, Vibhishan, said to the son of Sumitra (Laxman) (13), 'Look at these demons. That dark-as-cloud and huge demon army which you see there in front, you should first try to remove this hindrance/obstacle in our path (14). When this (wall of demon army) is removed, then we can see (approach, meet) the son of the king of demons (i.e. Meghnad, the son of Ravana). Attack him before he completes his religious rituals (because otherwise, if he is able to successfully complete his sacrifice, he will automatically become invincible) (15).

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जहि वीर दुरात्मानं हिंसापरमधार्मिकम्। विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा लक्ष्मणः शुभलक्षणः।।16।।
ववर्ष शरवर्षाणि राक्षसेन्द्रसुतं प्रति। पाषाणैः पर्वताग्रैश्च वृक्षैश्च हरियूथपाः।। 17।।
निर्जघ्नुः सर्वतो दैत्यांस्तेऽपि वानरयूथपान्। परश्वधैः शितैर्बाणैरसिभिर्यष्टितोमरैः।।18।।
निर्जघ्नुर्वानरानीकं तदा शब्दो महानभूत्। स सम्प्रहारस्तुमुलः संजज्ञे हरिरक्षसाम्।। 19।।

jahī vīra durātmānaṃ hiṃsāparamadhārmikam /
vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā lakṣmaṇaḥ śubhalakṣmaṇaḥ //
vavarṣa śaravarṣāṇi rākṣasendrasutaṃ prati /
pāṣāṇaiḥ parvatāgraiśca vṛkṣaiśca hariyūthapāḥ //
nirjaghnuḥ sarvato daityāṃste'pi vānarayūthapān /
paraśvadhaiḥ śitairbāṇairasibhiryaṣṭitomaraiḥ //
nirjaghnurvānarānīkaṃ tadā śabdo mahānabhūt /
sa samprahārastumulaḥ saṃjajñe harirakṣasām //

Oh the brave one! Kill this sinner, violent and cruel killer, who is wicked and an evil creature, soon'. Hearing these words of Vibhishan, Laxman, who had auspicious and good characteristics (16), began raining (showering) a hail of arrows aimed at the son of the king of demons (i.e. Meghnad). All other monkey commanders and their troops also pelted stones, boulders and trees (17) at the demons from all directions. Similarly, the demon hordes retaliated with their might on the monkey army with battle axes, sharp arrows, swords, sticks/batons/branches of trees and 'Tomar' (a dumb-bell, or a ball shaped ancient fighting gear attached to an iron rod. It is swung violently to dash and smash the heads of the enemy. In some instances, a Tomar is designed as a spear or a lancet) (18). There was a horrific, hair-raising tumult there, and a fiercely fought, one-on-one pitched battle broke out between the monkeys and the demons (19).

इन्द्रजित्स्वबलं सर्वमर्द्यमानं विलोक्य सः। निकुम्भिलां च होमं च त्यक्त्वा शीघ्रं विनिर्गतः।। 20।।
रथमारुह्य सधनुः क्रोधेन महतागमत्। समाह्वयन् स सौमित्रिं युद्धाय रणमूर्धनि।। 21।।

indrajitsvabalaṃ sarvamardyamānaṃ vilokya saḥ /
nikumbhilāṃ ca homaṃ ca tyaktvā śīghraṃ vinirgataḥ //
rathamāruhya sadhanuḥ krodhena mahatāgamat /
samāhvayan sa saumitriṃ yuddhāya raṇamūrdhani //

Observing that his army was being mercilessly crushed (i.e. vanquished, decimated and smashed), the brave Indrajeet left Nikumbhi and the fire sacrifice incomplete, and came out immediately

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(20). He quickly mounted his chariot with his bow in hand, and very angrily came to the battle field, full of exasperation, indignation and wrath, to face Laxman. He challenged the son of Sumitra (Laxman) for battle (i.e. a duel) (21).

सौमित्रे मेघनादोऽहं मया जीवन्न मोक्ष्यसे। तत्र दृष्ट्वा पितृव्यं स प्राह निष्ठुरभाषणम्।। 22।।
इहैव जातः संवृद्धः साक्षाद् भ्राता पितुर्मम। यस्त्वं स्वजनमुत्सृज्य परभृत्यत्वमागतः।।23।।

saumitre meghanādo'haṃ mayā jīvanna mokṣyase/
tatra dṛṣṭvā pitṛvyaṃ sa prāha niṣṭhurabhāṣaṇam//
ihaiva jātaḥ saṃvṛddhaḥ sākṣād bhrātā piturmama/
yastvaṃ svajanamutsṛjya parabhṛtyatvamāgataḥ//

He said, 'Oh Saumitre (the son of Sumitra; Laxman)! I am Meghnad. Now you cannot escape alive from me'.

Then he saw his uncle Vibhishan there, and feeling extremely disgusted and vehemently peeved, he addressed him in very scornful and contemptible tone, using harsh and sarcastic words (22), 'You are born here amongst us (i.e. in this race of the demons), you were brought up here, you are a real brother of my father, but unfortunately now you have left (forsaken, as if dead) your own kith and kin, and have instead accepted serfdom and subservience of others (23).

कथं द्रुह्यसि पुत्राय पापीयानसि दुर्मतिः। इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणं दृष्ट्वा हनूमत्पृष्ठतः स्थितम्।। 24।।
उद्यदायुधनिस्त्रिंशे रथे महति संस्थितः। महाप्रमाणमुद्यम्य घोरं विस्फारयन्धनुः।। 25।।

kathaṃ druhyasi putrāya pāpīyānasi durmatiḥ/
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā hanūmatpṛṣṭhataḥ sthitam//
udyadāyudhanistriṃśe rathe mahati saṃsthitaḥ/
mahāpramāṇamudyamya ghoraṃ visphārayandhanuḥ//

I am like your son (being your nephew), I do not know how and why you have developed animosity and ill-will with me. Surely, you are very sinful, pervert and wicked'.

Saying this, he looked at Laxman who was riding on the back (shoulders) of Hanuman (24). Sitting in a chariot which was provided with different types of fierce, potent and effective arms and armaments, the great demon took hold of a very large bow and made a terrible twang with it (25).

[Note :—Also refer to how Sri Ram and Laxman had earlier ridden the backs of Hanuman and Angad respectively in Canto 1, verse no. 31; Canto

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4, verse no. 9; Canto 6, verse no. 19 and Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 27-28.]

अद्य वो मामका बाणाः प्राणान्पास्यन्ति वानराः। ततः शरं दाशरथिः सन्धायामित्रकर्षणः।। 26।।
ससर्ज राक्षसेन्द्राय क्रुद्धः सर्प इव श्वसन्। इन्द्रजिद्रक्तनयनो लक्ष्मणं समुदैक्षत।। 27।।

adya vo māmakā bāṇāḥ prāṇānpāsyanti vānarāḥ/
tataḥ śaraṃ dāśarathiḥ sandhāyāmitrakarṣaṇaḥ//
sasarja rākṣasendrāya kruddhaḥ sarpa eva śvasan/
indrajidraktanayano lakṣmaṇaṃ samudaikṣata//

He said, 'Oh monkeys! Today my arrows will literally drink (i.e. suck out or sniff out) your life (i.e. my arrows are thirsty for your blood)'.

Then the son of Dashrath (Laxman) aimed an arrow which can vanquish and crush the enemy (26). He most furiously and angrily, like a hissing serpent, shot it at the king of demons (Meghnad). On the other hand, Indrajeet (Meghnad) too glared furiously at Laxman with red eyes (27).

शक्राशनिसमस्पर्शैर्लक्ष्मणेनाहतः शरैः। मुहूर्तमभवन्मूढः पुनः प्रत्याहृतेन्द्रियः।। 28।।
ददर्शावस्थितं वीरं वीरो दशरथात्मजम्। सोऽभिचक्राम सौमित्रिं क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनः।। 29।।

śakrāśanisamasparśailakṣmaṇenāhataḥ śaraiḥ/
muhūrtamabhavanmūḍhaḥ punaḥ pratyāhṛtendriyaḥ//
dadarśāvasthitaṃ vīraṃ vīro daśarathātmajam/
so'bhicakrāya saumitriṃ krodhasaṃraktalocanaḥ//

Being hit and injured by the arrow shot by Laxman, which was as formidable, powerful and tough as the Vajra of Indra, he (Meghnad) fainted for one Muhurt (roughly 1 hour and 48 minutes; but here it means 'for a short while'). When he regained consciousness (28), he saw the most brave and valorous son of Dashrath (Laxman) standing in front of him. Seeing the son of Sumitra (Laxman), that demon dashed vehemently towards him, his eyes red with anger (29).

शरान्धनुषि सन्धाय लक्ष्मणं चेदमब्रवीत्। यदि ते प्रथमे युद्धे न दृष्टो मे पराक्रमः।। 30।।
अद्य त्वां दर्शयिष्यामि तिष्ठेदानीं व्यवस्थितः। इत्युक्त्वा सप्तभिर्बाणैरभिविव्याध लक्ष्मणम्।।31।।
दशभिश्च हनूमन्तं तीक्ष्णधारैः शरोत्तमैः। ततः शरशतेनैव सम्प्रयुक्तेन वीर्यवान्।। 32।।
क्रोधद्विगुणसंरब्धो निर्बिभेद विभीषणम्। लक्ष्मणोऽपि तथा शत्रुं शरवर्षैरवाकिरत्।। 33।।

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śarāndhanuṣi sandhāya lakṣmaṇaṃ cedamabravīt /
yadi te prathame yuddhe na dṛṣṭo me parākramaḥ //
adya tvāṃ darśayiṣyāmi tiṣṭhedānīṃ vyavasthitaḥ /
ityuktvā saptabhirbāṇairabhivivyādha lakṣmaṇam //
daśabhiśca hanūmantaṃ tīkṣṇadhāraiḥ śarottamaiḥ /
tataḥ śaraśatenaiva samprayuktena vīryavān //
krodhadviguṇasaṃrabdho nirbibheda vibhīṣaṇam /
lakṣmaṇo'pi tathā śatruṃ śaravarṣairavākirat //

He mounted an arrow on his bow and said to Laxman, 'If you have not seen my prowess, courage, power, might and strength in the war earlier (30), then stand right there. I shall show it to you right now'. Saying this, he pierced (gravely wounded) Laxman with seven arrows (31), Hanuman with 10 arrows which were one of the best he had and which had sharp-edged tips, and Vibhishan with 100 arrows shot at him very angrily, with renewed vigour, and aimed carefully at him (so that the arrows don't miss their target). Meanwhile, Laxman also started showering arrows at the enemy (32-33).

तस्य बाणैः सुसंविद्धं कवचं काञ्चनप्रभम्। व्यशीर्यत रथोपस्थे तिलशः पतितं भुवि।। 34।।
ततः शरसहस्रेण सङ्क्रुद्धो रावणात्मजः। विभेद समरे वीरं लक्ष्मणं भीमविक्रमम्।। 35।।

tasya bāṇaiḥ susaṃviddhaṃ kavacaṃ kāñcanaprabham /
vyaśīryata rathopasthe tilaśaḥ patitaṃ bhuvi //
tataḥ śarasahasreṇa saṅkruddho rāvaṇātmajaḥ /
bibheda samare vīraṃ lakṣmaṇaṃ bhīmavikramam //

Peppered and perforated by his (Laxman's) arrows, the body-armour and shield of Meghnad, which had the radiance of gold, broke up into splinters and first fell on the rear of the chariot and then slid to the ground from there (34).

Then the son of Ravana (Meghnad) became very furious and wrathful, and he wounded the most valiant and valorous Laxman by thousands of arrows in retaliation (35).

व्यशीर्यतापतद्दिव्यं कवचं लक्ष्मणस्य च। कृतप्रतिकृतान्योन्यं बभूवतुरभिद्रुतौ।। 36।।
अभीक्ष्णं निःश्वसन्तौ तौ युध्येतां तुमुलं पुनः। शरसंवृतसर्वाङ्गौ सर्वतो रुधिरोक्षितौ।। 37।।

vyaśīryatāpataddivyaṃ kavacaṃ lakṣmaṇasya ca /
kṛtapratikṛtānyonyaṃ babhūvaturabhidrutau //
abhīkṣṇaṃ niḥśvasantau tau yudhyetāṃ tumulaṃ punaḥ /
śarasaṃvṛtasarvāṅgau sarvato rudhirokṣitau //

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As a result of this, even Laxman's magnificent and divine armour fell down, shattered. In this manner, the two brave warriors mutually fought each other, countering the aggressive steps taken by his opponent (36). Both of them breathed heavily and deeply every now and then, and they fought each other very ferociously. All the parts of their bodies were peppered by arrows and were drenched in blood (37).

सुदीर्घकालं तौ वीरावन्योन्यं निशितैः शरैः। अयुध्येतां महासत्त्वौ जयाजयविवर्जितौ ।। 38 ।।
एतस्मिन्नन्तरे वीरो लक्ष्मणः पञ्चभिः शरैः। रावणेः सारथिं साश्वं रथं च समचूर्णयत् ।। 39 ।।

sudīrghakālaṃ tau vīrāvanyonyaṃ niśitaiḥ śaraiḥ /
ayudhyetāṃ mahāsattvau jayājayavivarjitau //
etasminnantare vīro lakṣmaṇaḥ pañcabhiḥ śaraiḥ /
rāvaṇeḥ sārathiṃ sāśvaṃ rathaṃ ca samacūrṇayat //

For a very long time, those two valiant and valorous warriors fought each other with sharp and effective arrows. None of them could be victorious or be defeated by his opponent (38).

Suddenly, the brave Laxman shot five arrows to crush and kill the charioteer and the horses, and reduce the chariot of Ravana (which was used by Meghnad) to pulp (39).

चिच्छेद कार्मुकं तस्य दर्शयन्हस्तलाघवम्। सोऽन्यत्तु कार्मुकं भद्रं सज्यं चक्रे त्वरान्वितः ।। 40 ।।
तच्चापमपि चिच्छेद लक्ष्मणस्त्रिभिराशुगैः। तमेव छिन्नधन्वानं विव्याधानेकसायकैः ।। 41 ।।

ciccheda kārmukaṃ tasya darśayanhastalāghavam /
so'nyattu kārmukaṃ bhadraṃ sajyaṃ cakre tvarānvitaḥ //
taccāmapi ciccheda lakṣmaṇastribhirāśugaiḥ /
tameva chinnadhanvānaṃ vivyādhānekasāyakaiḥ //

Showing the deftness and skill of his hands at archery, he (Laxman) immediately cut-off his (Meghnad's) bow. The gentleman (Meghnad) took up another excellent bow and raised it (40).

Laxman cut it of too with three arrows and perforated and peppered the demon—who was by now without a bow—with numerous arrows (41).

पुनरन्यत्समादाय कार्मुकं भीमविक्रमः। इन्द्रजिल्लक्ष्मणं बाणैः शितैरादित्यसन्निभैः ।। 42 ।।
बिभेद वानरान्सर्वान्बाणैरापूरयन्दिशः। तत ऐन्द्रं समादाय लक्ष्मणो रावणिं प्रति ।। 43 ।।
सन्धायाकृष्य कर्णान्तं कार्मुकं दृढनिष्ठुरम्। उवाच लक्ष्मणो वीरः स्मरन् रामपदाम्बुजम् ।। 44 ।।

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punaranyatsamādāya kārmukaṃ bhīmavikramaḥ /
indrajillakṣmaṇaṃ bāṇaiḥ śitairādityasannibhaiḥ //
bibheda vānarānsarvānbāṇairāpūrayandiśaḥ /
tata aindraṃ samādāya lakṣmaṇo rāvaṇiṃ prati //
sandhāyākṛṣya karṇāntaṃ kārmukaṃ dṛḍhaniṣṭhuram /
uvāca lakṣmaṇo vīraḥ smaran rāmapadāmbujam //

Then the most valiant and valorous Indrajeet picked up another bow (the 3rd one), and covering all the directions by a hail of sun-like splendorous, dazzling and sharp arrows, he wounded Laxman and all other monkeys. Then Laxman took out the especially empowered arrow called 'Aendra', and aiming it at the son of Ravana, mounted it on his bow. He pulled the string of the uncompromisingly strong, sturdy and tough bow right up to his ears, and remembering (invoking) the lotus-like holy feet of Sri Ram in his heart, the brave Laxman said solemnly (42-44)—

धर्मात्मा सत्यसन्धश्च रामो दाशरथिर्यदि। त्रिलोक्यामप्रतिद्वन्द्वस्तदेनं जहि रावणिम्।। 45।।
इत्युक्त्वा बाणमाकर्णाद्विकृष्य तमजिह्मगम्। लक्ष्मणः समरे वीरः ससर्जेन्द्रजितं प्रति।।46।।

dharmātmā satyasandhaśca rāmo dāśarathiryadi /
trilokyāmapratidvandvastadenaṃ jahi rāvaṇim //
ityuktvā bāṇamākarṇādvikṛṣya tamajihmagam /
lakṣmaṇaḥ samare vīraḥ sasarjendrajitaṃ prati //

'If the son of Dashrath (Sri Ram) is righteous and upholder of Dharma, is the upholder of the sanctity of truth and is steadfast in truthfulness, and is without any opponent in the three worlds (the entire universe)—then, oh my arrow, you must kill this son of Ravana' (45).

Saying this, the brave Laxman pulled that arrow up to his ears and shot it straight at Indrajeet (Meghnad) (46).

स शरः सशिरस्त्राणं श्रीमज्ज्वलितकुण्डलम्। प्रमथ्येन्द्रजितः कायात्पातयामास भूतले।। 47।।
ततः प्रमुदिता देवाः कीर्तयन्तो रघूत्तमम्। ववर्षुः पुष्पवर्षाणि स्तुवन्तश्च मुहुर्मुहुः।। 48।।

sa śaraḥ saśirastrāṇaṃ śrīmajjvalitakuṇḍalam /
pramathyendrajitaḥ kāyātpātayāmāsa bhūtale //
tataḥ pramuditā devāḥ kīrtayanto raghūttamam /
vavarṣu puṣpavarṣāṇi stuvantaśca muhurmuhuḥ //

That arrow severed the head of Indrajeet (Meghnad)—which was protected by a helmet and looked majestic, glorious and radiant with

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large ear-rings—from his body, and it fell on the ground (47). In this manner, when Meghnad was killed, the Gods became exhilarant and extremely ecstatic with joy. They repeatedly sang in chorus the praises of the one who was the best in the clan of Raghus (i.e. Laxman), and showered flowers on him from the sky (48).

जहर्ष शक्रो भगवान्सह देवैर्महर्षिभिः। आकाशेऽपि च देवानां शुश्रुवे दुन्दुभिस्वनः॥ 49॥
विमलं गगनं चासीत्स्थिराभूद्विश्वधारिणी। निहतं रावणिं दृष्ट्वा जयजल्पसमन्वितः॥ 50॥

jaharṣa śakro bhagavānsaha devairmaharṣibhiḥ /
ākāśe'pi ca devānāṃ śuśruve dundubhisvanaḥ //
vimalaṃ gaganaṃ cāsītsthirābhūdviśvadhāriṇī /
nihataṃ rāvaṇiṃ dṛṣṭvā jayajalpasamanvitaḥ //

Lord Indra, along with the Gods and the great sages, felt very happy and exhilarant. At that time, the sound of the kettledrums and trumpets of the Gods reverberated in the sky (49).

Seeing that the son of Ravana (Meghnad) has been killed (or eliminated), there was a chorus of acclaim and thunderous applause everywhere. The sky became clear and the earth, which is the mother and the bearer of this existence (i.e. all living creatures in this world), also became stable (i.e. calm and peaceful, without any torments and worries for the future) (50).

गतश्रमः स सौमित्रिः शङ्खमापूरयद्रणे। सिंहनादं ततः कृत्वा ज्याशब्दमकरोद्विभुः॥ 51॥
तेन नादेन संहृष्टा वानराश्च गतश्रमाः। वानरेन्द्रैश्च सहितः स्तुवद्भिर्हृष्टमानसैः॥ 52॥
लक्ष्मणः परितुष्टात्मा ददर्शाभ्येत्य राघवम्। हनूमद्राक्षसाभ्यां च सहितो विनयान्वितः॥ 53॥
ववन्दे भ्रातरं रामं जयेष्ठं नारायणं विभुम्। त्वत्प्रसादाद्रघुश्रेष्ठ हतो रावणिराहवे॥ 54॥

gataśramaḥ sa saumitriḥ śaṅkhamāpūrayadraṇe /
siṃhanādaṃ tataḥ kṛtvā jyāśabdamakarodvibhuḥ //
tena nādena saṃhṛṣṭā vānarāśca gataśramāḥ /
vānarendraiśca sahitaḥ stuvadbhirhṛṣṭamānasaiḥ //
lakṣmaṇaḥ parituṣṭātmā dadarśābhyetya rāghavam /
hanūmadrākṣasābhyāṃ ca sahito vinayānvitaḥ //
vavande bhrātaraṃ rāmaṃ jyeṣṭhaṃ nārāyaṇaṃ vibhum /
tvatprasādādraghuśreṣṭha hato rāvaṇirāhave //

When the son of Sumitra (Laxman) was a bit relaxed, he sounded his conch, the sounds of which resounded in the whole battle field.

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Then (in jubilation and to celebrate the occasion) he twanged his bow like the roar of a lion (51). The terrible cacophony as well as the thunderous and reverberating sound made by spontaneous celebrations, made all the monkeys ecstatic with joy, and they became free of all battle fatigue and weariness. Then, along with the jubilant and celebrating brave monkeys and being praised by them (for his epic victory over Meghnad) (52), Laxman came to Raghav (Sri Ram), most cheerfully and satisfied (because he had successfully completed the assignment), to have his holy Darshan (i.e. to meet and see his Lord Sri Ram for whose sake he had staked his own life). Along with Hanuman and the demon king (Vibhishan), Laxman prayerfully (53) bowed (i.e. showed respect and reverence) before his elder brother Sri Ram who is Narayan (the supreme Lord; another name for Lord Vishnu) and Vibhu (the omnipresent, all-pervading, magnanimous, benevolent, almighty and eternal Lord). He said—'Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! By your kind grace and beneficence, the son of Ravana has been killed in the battle' (54).

श्रुत्वा तल्लक्ष्मणाद्भक्त्या तमालिङ्ग्य रघूत्तमः। मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय मुदितः सस्नेहमिदमब्रवीत्॥ 55॥
साधु लक्ष्मण तुष्टोऽस्मि कर्म ते दुष्करं कृतम्। मेघनादस्य निधने जितं सर्वमरिन्दम॥ 56॥

śrutvā tallakṣmaṇādbhaktyā tamāliṅgya raghūttamaḥ/
mūrdhnyavaghrāya muditaḥ sasnehamidamabravīt//
sādhu lakṣmaṇa tuṣṭo'smi karma te duṣkaraṃ kṛtam/
meghanādasya nidhane jitaṃ sarvamarindama//

Hearing this most devoted, humble and submissive words of Laxman (i.e. words which did not have the slightest trace of pride, ego, haughtiness or arrogance), the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) became very pleased and happy, and he embraced Laxman affectionately. He smelt his head (as a gesture of affection) and said (55), 'Oh Laxman! You are great and saintly! I am very satisfied by your deeds. Today you have done a very difficult task. Oh the vanquisher of enemies! By the death of Meghnad, we have apparently won everything (in a symbolic manner) (56).

[Note :—Sri Ram means that the death of Meghnad, and Kumbhakarn earlier, has dealt a death knell to Ravana, for the former were the most formidable warriors amongst the demon clan, only matching Ravana in their ferociousness, invincibility and expertise with arms, besides being protected by various boons which made them invincible. With Meghnad

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out of the way, three fourths of the war had literally been won, as it were. Ravana's morale will dip tremendously, and so will of the rest of his army. And an army with lost morale is sure to lose in the battle field. This will certainly result in its final rout. Meghnad and Kumbhakarn were the backbone of Ravana's dare devilry and recklessness; they were his most trusted lieutenants and comrades in arm. On numerous earlier occasions when he found himself trapped, it was Meghnad who came to the rescue of his father. With him out of the way, the decks were clear for Sri Ram. Now Ravana was literally alone and felt cornered. That is what Sri Ram means by saying 'everything has been almost won'. See also Uttar Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 18.]

अहोरात्रैस्त्रिभिर्वीरः कथञ्चिद्विनिपातितः। निःसपत्नः कृतोऽस्म्यद्य निर्यास्यति हि रावणः।। 57।।
पुत्रशोकान्मया योद्धुं तं हनिष्यामि रावणम्।। 58।।
मेघनादं हतं श्रुत्वा लक्ष्मणेन महाबलम्। रावणः पतितो भूमौ मूर्च्छितः पुनरुत्थितः।
विललापातिदीनात्मा पुत्रशोकेन रावणः।। 59।।

ahorātraistribhirvīraḥ kathañcidvinipātitaḥ /
niḥsapatnaḥ kṛto'smyadya niryāsyati hi rāvaṇaḥ //
putraśokānmayā yoddhuṃ taṃ haniṣyāmi rāvaṇam //
meghanādaṃ hataṃ śrutvā lakṣmaṇena mahābalam /
rāvaṇaḥ patito bhūmau mūrcchitaḥ punarutthitaḥ /
vilalāpātidīnātmā putraśokena rāvaṇaḥ //

You have fought bravely and courageously for three days and three nights and some how slayed that great warrior (Meghnad). By doing this, you have made me virtually free of enemies. Ravana has now become defenseless without his son to support him (57). Since Ravana is already overcome by grief at the death of his son, I shall easily kill him when he comes over to fight with me' (58).

Hearing that the most brave, strong and courageous Meghnad has been killed by Laxman, Ravana fainted and fell on the ground out of shock. When he regained consciousness, he lamented, mourned and wailed woefully as he grieved gravely for his son (59).

[Note to verse no. 57:—Refer to Canto 8, verse no. 50 according to which Laxman was to slay Meghnad in one day. What Sri Ram means by 3 days and nights is the total number of days that Laxman and Meghnad had been fighting each other since the outbreak of hostility. Canto 5, verse no. 65 etc. describe the 1st day of Meghnad's war, Canto 6, verse nos. 6-9 describe the 2nd day of Laxman's battle, and this Canto 9, verse nos. 21-47 describe the 3rd and final day of Laxman's battle with Meghnad which resulted in the latter's death.]

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पुत्रस्य गुणकर्माणि संस्मरन्पर्यदेवयत्। अद्य देवगणाः सर्वे लोकपाला महर्षयः।। 60।।
हतमिन्द्रजितं ज्ञात्वा सुखं स्वप्स्यन्ति निर्भयाः। इत्यादि बहुशः पुत्रलालसो विललाप ह।।61।।
ततः परमसंक्रुद्धो रावणो राक्षसाधिपः। उवाच राक्षसान्सर्वान्निनाशयिषुराहवे।। 62।।

putrasya guṇakarmāṇi saṃsmaranparyadevayat /
adya devagaṇāḥ sarve lokapālā maharṣayaḥ //
hatamindrajitaṃ jñātvā sukhaṃ svapsyanti nirbhayāḥ /
ityādi bahuśaḥ putralālaso vilalāpa ha //
tataḥ paramasaṃkruddho rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ /
uvāca rākṣasānsarvānnināśayiṣurāhave //

Recalling the great and matchless qualities, characters, virtues and deeds of his son, Ravana began grieving and mourning a lot. 'Today, all the Gods, Lokpals (custodians of the Lokas or the various worlds) and great sages and hermits (60) shall sleep happily and fearlessly knowing that Indrajeet has been killed'. In this manner, he lamented gravely for his son in various ways due to his fatherly affection for him (61).

Thence, after sometimes, Ravana, the king of demons, became extremely furious with anger and indignation, and discussed with all his ministers how to destroy the enemy in the war (62).

स पुत्रवधसन्तप्तः शूरः क्रोधवशं गतः। संवीक्ष्य रावणो बुद्ध्या हन्तुं सीतां प्रदुद्रुवे।। 63।।
खड्गपाणिमथायान्तं क्रुद्धं दृष्ट्वा दशाननम्। राक्षसीमध्यगा सीता भयशोकाकुलाभवत्।।64।।

sa putravadhasantaptaḥ śūraḥ krodhavaśaṃ gataḥ /
saṃvīkṣya rāvaṇo buddhyā hantuṃ sītāṃ pradudruve //
khaḍgapāṇimathāyāntaṃ kruddhaṃ dṛṣṭvā daśānanam /
rākṣasāmadhyagā sītā bhayaśokākulābhavat //

Then the brave and courageous Ravana, being overwhelmed by remorse and grief at the death of his son, thought of something and angrily rushed to kill Sita (63).

Seeing the 10-headed demon rushing wrathfully and full of vengeance towards herself with a sword drawn in his hands, Sita—who was sitting surrounded by demonesses—became terrified by mortal fear (64).

[Note—In a similar impulsive move, Ravana had ordered Hanuman to be killed when Vibhishan had to intervene to protect Hanuman in Sundar Kand Canto 4, verse nos. 29-35.]

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एतस्मिन्नन्तरे तस्य सचिवो बुद्धिमान् शुचिः। सुपार्श्वो नाम मेधावी रावणं वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 65।।
ननु नाम दशग्रीव साक्षाद्वैश्रवणानुजः। वेदविद्याव्रतस्नातः स्वकर्मपरिनिष्ठितः।। 66।।

etasminnantare tasya sacivo buddhimān śuciḥ /
supārśvo nāma medhāvī rāvaṇaṃ vākyamabravīt //
nanu nāma daśagrīva sākṣādvaiśravaṇānujaḥ /
vedavidyāvratasnātaḥ svakarmaparinisṭhitaḥ //

Just at that time, one of his ministers named Suparshava, who was intelligent, wise, pure-hearted and scholarly, intervened and said (65), 'Oh the 10-headed one! What is this? What are you doing? You are a younger brother of Kuber, the son of Visrawa. You are an expert in the tenets of the Vedas, observe the rules and regulations prescribed by them, even to the extent of bathing at the end of fire sacrifices and observing religious fasting, and are steadfast and vigilant in following the rules and regulations prescribed by them for a person of your birth (as a Brahmin, because you are born as one) (66).

[Note—It is pertinent to note here that inspite of being a evil demon by body, Ravana was very diligent in observing religious sanctions and doctrines. He was very scholarly also. He performed fire sacrifices, his patron God was Lord Shiva, and he worshipped a Goddess. There was a regular temple in the ground of his palace as is proved by the fact that Hanuman had demolished the temple and used its pillars to smother the demon army when he was in Lanka on the mission of finding the whereabouts of Sita (see Sunder Kand, canto 3, verse no.76-77 and 79). When he had gone to meet Sita at the Ashok grove, he had seen a magnificent temple there as mentioned in Sundar Kand, canto 2, verse no. 6.]

अनेकगुणसम्पन्नः कथं स्त्रीवधमिच्छसि। अस्माभिः सहितो युद्धे हत्वा रामं च लक्ष्मणम्।
प्राप्स्यसे जानकीं शीघ्रमित्युक्तः स न्यवर्तत।। 67।।
ततो दुरात्मा सुहृदा निवेदितं वचः सुधर्म्यं प्रतिगृह्य रावणः।
गृहं जगामाशु शुचा विमूढधीः पुनः सभां च प्रययौ सुहृद्वृतः।।68।।

anekaguṇasampannaḥ kathaṃ strīvadhamicchasi /
asmābhiḥ sahito yuddhe hatvā rāmaṃ ca lakṣmaṇam /
prāpsyase jānakīṃ śighramityuktaḥ sa nyavartata //
tato durātmā suhṛdā niveditaṃ
vacaḥ sudharmyaṃ pratigṛhya rāvaṇaḥ /
gṛhaṃ jagāmāśu sucā vimūḍhadhīḥ
punaḥ sabhāṃ ca prayayau suhṛdvṛtaḥ //

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Being endowed with so many virtues and values, how can you ever think of killing a woman (especially when she is unarmed and already distressed)? Accompanied by all of us, you will soon kill Sri Ram and Laxman in the war and acquire Janki (Sita) (as a trophy of war!)' (67).

Thereafter, the wicked and pervert Ravana, having accepted the sane and righteous words of advice given by his loyal friend-minister who managed to dissuade him, checked himself in time, and abandoning his recklessness, he returned back to his palace. He was totally confounded, greatly perturbed, extremely vexed, full of fear and consternation and unable to think rationally because of his surging bouts of insurmountable sorrows and grief. The next day, he went to the royal court accompanied by (or surrounded by) his relatives, compatriots and well-wishers (68).

***

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 10

Destruction of Ravana's fire sacrifice; Mandodari's entreaty with Ravana

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

स विचार्य सभामध्ये राक्षसैः सह मन्त्रिभिः। निर्ययौ येऽवशिष्टास्तै राक्षसैः सह राघवम्।।1।।
शलभः शलभैर्युक्तः प्रज्वलन्तमिवानलम्। ततो रामेण निहताः सर्वे ते राक्षसा युधि।।2।।
स्वयं रामेण निहतस्तीक्ष्णबाणेन वक्षसि। व्यथितस्त्वरितं लङ्कां प्रविवेश दशाननः।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

sa vicārya sabhāmadhye rākṣasaiḥ saha mantribhiḥ /
niryayau ye'vaśiṣṭāstai rākṣasaiḥ saha rāghavam //
śalabhaḥ śalabhairyuktaḥ prajvalantamivānalam /
tato rāmeṇa nihatāḥ sarve te rākṣasā yudhi //
svayaṃ rāmeṇa nihatastīkṣṇabāṇena vakṣasi /
vyathitastvaritaṃ laṅkāṃ praviveśa daśānanaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Then he (Ravana) discussed the situation with other demons and ministers present in the court. Deciding on a final course of action, all the remaining demons headed towards Raghav (Sri Ram) (1) just like the moth accompanied by other

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insects heads towards a burning flame or fire and gets destroyed (by getting burnt) in the process. Sri Ram destroyed (killed) all the demons in the battle that followed (2). The 10-headed one (Ravana) was gravely hurt himself by sharp arrows shot by Sri Ram which hit him in his chest, and as a consequence of it he immediately returned to Lanka, gravely wounded and tormented (3).

दृष्ट्वा रामस्य बहुशः पौरुषं चाप्यमानुषम्। रावणो मारुतेश्चैव शीघ्रं शुक्रान्तिकं ययौ।। 4।।
नमस्कृत्य दशग्रीवः शुक्रं प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत्। भगवन् राघवेणैवं लङ्का राक्षसयूथपैः।। 5।।
विनाशिता महादैत्या निहताः पुत्रबान्धवाः। कथं मे दुःखसन्दोहस्त्वयि तिष्ठति सद्गुरौ।। 6।।

dṛṣṭvā rāmasya bahuśaḥ pauruṣaṃ cāpyamānuṣam /
rāvaṇo māruteścaiva śīghraṃ śukrāntikaṃ yayau //
namaskṛtya daśagrīvaḥ śukraṃ prāñjalirabravīt /
bhagavan rāghaveṇaivaṃ laṅkā rākṣasayuthapaiḥ //
vināśitā mahādaityā nihatāḥ putrabāndhavāḥ /
kathaṃ me duḥkhasandohastvayi tiṣṭhati sadgurau //

Observing numerous super-human and mighty deeds of both Sri Ram and Maruti (Hanuman), Ravana wasted no time and hurriedly went to his Guru Sukracharya (4).

The 10-headed one (Ravana) bowed before him in reverence, and said with folded hands, 'Oh Lord! Raghav (Sri Ram) has destroyed the whole city of Lanka along with the chief commanders of the demon army, great demon warriors, their sons, relatives and friends. How come we have reached such a miserable and sorrowful state of affairs while having you as our true Guru? (5-6).

[Note :—Ravana means that Sukracharya is doing nothing for the demons to prevent such a catastrophic sequence of events from happening. Why is he not doing anything or advising some way out for them as a true and honest, loyal and wise advisor should normally and morally do. Sukracharya is the moral preceptor of the demons as Brihaspati is for the Gods.]

इति विज्ञापितो दैत्यगुरुः प्राह दशाननम्। होमं कुरु प्रयत्नेन रहसि त्वं दशाननम्।। 7।।
यदि विघ्नो न चेद्धोमे तर्हि होमानलोत्थितः।। 8।।
महान् रथश्च वाहाश्च चापतूणीरसायकाः। सम्भविष्यन्ति तैर्युक्तस्त्वमजेयो भविष्यसि।। 9।।

iti vijñāpito daityaguruḥ prāha daśānanam /
homaṃ kuru prayatnena rahasi tvaṃ daśānana //
yadi vighno na ceddhome tarhi homānalotthitaḥ //

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mahān rathaśca vāhāśca cāpatūṇīrasāyakāḥ /
sambhaviṣyanti tairyuktastvamajeyo bhaviṣyasi //

When the 10-headed one (Ravana) pleaded in this manner, the Guru of demons prescribed (or declared, announced) thus—'Oh the 10-headed one! In whatever way it is possible for you, go to a secluded place and perform the fire sacrifice (7). If there is no interference with it and it is not defiled, then out of it shall emerge a large chariot, horses, a bow, a quiver and arrows. You shall become unconquerable by obtaining them (8-9).

गृहाण मन्त्रान्मद्दत्तान् गच्छ होमं कुरु द्रुतम्। इत्युक्तस्त्वरितं गत्वा रावणो राक्षसाधिपः ।। 10 ।।
गुहां पातालसदृशीं मन्दिरे स्वे चकार ह। लङ्काद्वारकपाटादि बद्ध्वा सर्वत्र यत्नतः ।। 11 ।।
होमद्रव्याणि सम्पाद्य यान्युक्तान्याभिचारिके। गुहां प्रविश्य चैकान्ते मौनी होमं प्रचक्रमे ।। 12 ।।

gṛhāṇa mantrānmaddattān gaccha homaṃ kuru drutam /
ityuktastvaritaṃ gatvā rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ //
guhāṃ pātālasadṛśīṃ mandire sve cakāra ha /
laṅkādvārakapāṭādi baddhvā sarvatra yatnataḥ //
homadravyāṇi sampādya yānyuktānyābhicārike /
guhāṃ praviśya caikānte maunī homaṃ pracakrame //

Accept the Mantras (a group of divine syllables having mystical and magical powers) which I give you, and go and perform the fire sacrifice immediately using them'.

When he had advised so, the king of demons, Ravana, went (10) to his palace and got a deep pit or underground cavern constructed (or dug out) under it. Then he got all the gates and entrance points firmly closed shut most carefully (i.e. they were properly bolted, sealed, double checked, secured, and guards were posted there) (11). Then he thoughtfully and carefully collected all the various items required for doing such fire sacrifices as prescribed in the scriptures (which would make a person invincible), and then entered the cave or the dug out. Observing full concentration, remaining undisturbed deep inside the dug out, and in silence, he started performing the ritual at a secluded or lonely corner of the place (12).

उत्थितं धूममालोक्य महान्तं रावणानुजः। रामाय दर्शयामास होमधूमं भयाकुलः ।। 13 ।।
पश्य राम दशग्रीवो होमं कर्तुं समारभत्। यदि होमः समाप्तः स्यात्तदाजेयो भविष्यति ।। 14 ।।

utthitaṃ dhūmamālokya mahāntaṃ rāvaṇānujaḥ /
rāmāya darśayāmāsa homadhūmaṃ bhayākulaḥ //

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paśya rāma daśagrīvo homaṃ kartuṃ samārabhat /
yadi homaḥ samāptaḥ syāttadājeyo bhaviṣyati //

Then Ravana's younger brother (Vibhishan) saw a huge column of smoke rising up in the sky, and he became alarmed. He showed that plume of smoke coming out of the fire sacrifice to Sri Ram (13).

He (Vibhishan) said, 'Oh Sri Ram! Look, the 10-headed one has started performing the fire sacrifice. If that is completed without interference or hindrance, then he shall become unconquerable (14).

[Note :—The cave, cavern or pit had a chimney or vent for escape of the smoke during the fire ritual. This trail did Ravana in. That plume of smoke could be seen rising high up in the sky and possibly was drifting towards Sri Ram's camp. The aromatic herbs used as offering to the fire further confirmed the fact that it was not an accidental fire or a smoldering left-over of the day's destructive war. This was also the way that Vibhishan got wind of Meghnad performing the fires sacrifice in Lanka Kand, Canto 8, verse nos. 57-60.]

अतो विघ्नाय होमस्य प्रेषयाशु हरीश्वरान्। तथेति रामः सुग्रीवसम्मतेनाङ्गदं कपिम्।। 15।।
हनूमत्प्रमुखान्वीरानादिदेश महाबलान्। प्राकारं लङ्घयित्वा ते गत्वा रावणमन्दिरम्।। 16।।

ato vighnāya homasya preṣayāśu harīśvarān /
tatheti rāmaḥ sugrīvasammatenāṅgadaṃ kapim //
hanūmatpramukhānvīrānādideśa mahābalān /
prākāraṃ laṅghayitvā te gatvā rāvaṇamandiram //

Hence, dispatch the commanders of the monkey army as soon as possible to create obstacles in the completion of the fire sacrifice'.

Saying 'alright', Sri Ram consulted Sugriv and ordered Angad, Hanuman and other great, valiant and strong warriors to proceed forthwith on the mission. All of them leapt across or swung across the ramparts of the city and reached Ravana's palace (15-16).

[Note :—It will be noted that Ravana and Meghnad got a taste of their own medicine. They were used to defiling the fire sacrifices of sages, hermits and seers. Though this was a reprehensive act on the part of the righteous army of Sri Ram, but we must remember that he was fighting a war, and wars are merciless; certain principals that are applicable to civil life are not relevant in wars, and they often require pre-emption. He wished to give a message that a thorn has to be plucked out by another thorn; it was a literal tit for tat for the demon clan. It also shows that when all means to avoid confrontation are exhausted, when the wicked, the pervert, the rascal, the unrighteous evil mongers would not see reason

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and mend their ways no matter how much one tries, then in order to restore peace and tranquility, the balance of order and righteousness, it does become imperative often times to use harsh methods for the larger interest of the society and humanity. If the carrot doesn't work, the stick has to be oftentimes used! If the Lord shows mercy and compassion—which is actually his habit and wont—then multitudes suffer due to the wickedness of a handful of persons. It is better to sacrifice them and salvage the boat of peaceful and harmonious existence rather than pretending to be righteous and let the humanity at large suffer. Being a king and Lord of the universe and its inhabitants, it was morally bound on Sri Ram to protect his larger subjects from the cruelty and tyranny unleashed by Ravana and his kith and kin who were in a minority in any case.]

दशकोट्यः प्लवङ्गानां गत्वा मन्दिररक्षकान्। चूर्णयामासुरश्वांश्च गजांश्च न्यहनन् क्षणात्।। 17।।
ततश्च सरमा नाम प्रभाते हस्तसंज्ञया। विभीषणस्य भार्या सा होमस्थानमसूचयत्।। 18।।

daśakoṭyaḥ plavaṅgānāṃ gatvā mandirarakṣakān /
cūrṇayāmāsuraśvāṃśca gajāṃśca nyahanan kṣaṇāt //
tataśca saramā nāma prabhāte hastasaṃjñayā /
vibhīṣasya bhāryā sā homasthānamasūcayat //

Those ten crore (1 crore = 10 million) monkeys crushed (trounced, trampled under foot and literally fell) the guards of the palace, and killed numerous horses and elephants in a short while (17).

(There was a great tumult throughout the night in Lanka) As soon as it was dawn, the wife of Vibhishan named Sarma indicated the place of the sacrifice by a gesture of her hands (i.e. she showed the monkeys the trap door leading to the cavern) (18).

[Note :—This is how 'the enemy within' betrays! Ravana's bad times had made him forget about Sarma, or perhaps he regarded her as irrelevant as a mosquito which does not require any special attention. It proved his final undoing even as a small ant can sneak up an elephant's trunk and kill it, as the saying goes. Ravana should have imprisoned her as soon as he kicked Vibhishan out. This slight miss in his radar of wisdom and faulty strategy resulted in the whole planning tumbling down like a pack of cards, as it were. He should have, at the least, put her under strict guard of trusted demonesses. This was a big blunder from the strategic point of view that Ravana made and never lived to regret.

On the other hand, we cannot blame Sarma for her acts, for what do we expect from a woman whose husband had been publicly insulted and forced to go to exile. And, for that matter, we should appreciate the greatness of Ravana's heart that he did not torture her inspite of the knowledge of Vibhishan's betrayal.]

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गुहापिधानपाषाणमङ्गदः पादघट्टनैः। चूर्णयित्वा महासत्त्वः प्रविवेश महागुहाम्।। 19।।
दृष्ट्वा दशाननं तत्र मीलिताक्षं दृढासनम्। ततोऽङ्गदाज्ञया सर्वे वानरा विविशुर्द्रुतम्।। 20।।

guhāpidhānapāṣāṇamaṅgadaḥ pādaghaṭṭanaiḥ /
cūrṇayitvā mahāsattvaḥ praviveśa mahāguhām //
dṛṣṭvā daśānanaṃ tatra mīlitākṣaṃ dṛḍhāsanam /
tato'ṅgadājñayā sarve vānarā viviśurdrutam //

The most strong and valorous Angad kicked aside and stomped to pieces the heavy stone which was put at the entrance of the cave (as a trap door) to block it. Then he entered the deep pit or cavern (19). There he saw the 10-headed one (Ravana) sitting cross-legged in a meditative posture with closed eyes. Then, on the orders of Angad, all the monkeys quickly trooped inside the cave or pit (20).

तत्र कोलाहलं चक्रुस्ताडयन्तश्च सेवकान्। सम्भारांश्चिक्षिपुस्तस्य होमकुण्डे समन्ततः।। 21।।
स्रुवमाच्छिद्य हस्ताच्च रावणस्य बलादुषा। तेनैव सञ्जघानाशु हनूमान् प्लवगाग्रणीः।।22।।

tatra kolāhalaṃ cakrustāḍayantaśca sevakān /
saṃbhārāṃścikṣipustasya homakuṇḍe samantataḥ //
sruvamācchidya hastācca rāvaṇasya balādruṣā /
tenaiva sañjaghānāśu hanūmān plavagāgraṇīḥ //

The monkeys literally barged inside the grotto and went berserk, ransacking the entire cave. They started thrashing the servants and attendants and created a great ruckus. They threw or put all the various items kept there for the fire sacrifice, into the fire pit (21). Hanuman, who was in the vanguard of the monkeys army, snatched the ladle forcefully from the hands of Ravana, and hit him with it (using it as a baton) (22).

घ्नन्ति दन्तैश्च काष्ठैश्च वानरास्तमितस्ततः। न जहौ रावणो ध्यानं हतोऽपि विजिगीषया।। 23।।
प्रविश्यान्तःपुरे वेश्मन्यङ्गदो वेगवत्तरः। समानयत्केशबन्धे धृत्वा मन्दोदरीं शुभाम्।।24।।

ghnanti dantaiśca kāṣṭaiśca vānarāstamitastataḥ /
na jahau rāvaṇo dhyānaṃ hato'pi vijigīṣayā //
praviśyāntaḥpure veśmanyaṅgado vegavattaraḥ /
samānayatkeśabandhe dhṛtvā mandodarīṃ śubhām //

The monkeys were attacking Ravana from all the sides with their teeth and sticks (tearing and thrashing him mercilessly). But he did not stop from meditating inspite of being so fiercely attacked, hoping against odds for ultimate victory (23).

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[When they had failed to instigate him or disturb him from his meditative posture and performance of the fire sacrifice inspite of their best of efforts, then—] Angad swiftly went inside the royal palace and dragged the chaste Mandodari out by her plaits (i.e. by pulling at her hairs) and brought her there (i.e. inside the cave) (24).

रावणस्यैव पुरतो विलपन्तीमनाथवत्। विददाराङ्गदस्तस्याः कञ्चुकं रत्नभूषितम्।। 25।।
मुक्ता विमुक्ताः पतिताः समन्ताद्रत्नसञ्चयैः। श्रोणिसूत्रं निपतितं त्रुटितं रत्नचित्रितम्।। 26।।

rāvaṇasyaiva purato vilapantīmanāthavat /
vidadārāṅgadastasyāḥ kañcukaṃ ratnabhūṣitam //
muktā vimuktāḥ patitāḥ samantādratnasañcayaiḥ /
śroṇisūtraṃ nipatitaṃ truṭitaṃ ratnacitritam //

In front of Ravana, he tore apart the bodice studded (embroidered) with various gems and jewels from the body of Mandodari who was wailing and lamenting most woefully like a destitute (25). The pearls of the bodice came off it and scattered here and there on the ground along with the fallen gems. In a similar way, the gem-studded chastity-belt also snapped and fell on the ground (26).

कटिप्रदेशाद्विस्रस्ता नीवी तस्यैव पश्यतः। भूषणानि च सर्वाणि पतितानि समन्ततः।। 27।।
देवगन्धर्वकन्याश्च नीता हृष्टैः प्लवङ्गमैः। मन्दोदरी रुरोदाथ रावणस्याग्रतो भृशम्।। 28।।

kaṭipradeśādvisrastā nīvī tasyaiva paśyataḥ /
bhūṣaṇāni ca sarvāṇi patitāni samantataḥ //
devagandharvakanyāśca nītā hṛṣṭaiḥ plavaṅgamaiḥ /
mandodarī rurodātha rāvaṇasyāgrato bhṛśam //

The garment worn by her on the lower half of her body became loose from the waist, and even while he (Ravana) watched stunned and appalled in horror, indignation, dismay and perplexity, it slid down from the waist. All her ornaments fell down and scattered everywhere (27). Similarly, out of jest and mischief, other monkeys gleefully brought numerous other maidens belonging to the Gods and Gandharvas (who had been forcefully kept by Ravana as his mistresses) there from the royal palace. Then (at the sight of mass disrobing of the womenfolk of the royal household), Mandodari began weeping and lamenting gravely in front of Ravana (28).

[Note :— Angad tried to violate the modesty of Mandodari to instigate Ravana. Though it was a most outrageous and shocking incident to have

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been perpetrated by Angad, it was part of the job to cause hindrance in the completion of Ravana's fire sacrifice. Successful completion of the objective of getting the fire sacrifice stopped at any cost was of paramount importance, because it was a do or die situation, a war— and no chances could be taken. This was a tact which Ravana had been using himself in causing various torments to the Gods and sages to cause hindrances in their fire sacrifices. So he has got a taste of his own medicine, as it were. See not to verse nos. 15-16.]

क्रोशन्ती करुणं दीना जगाद दशकन्धरम्। निर्लज्जोऽसि परैरेवं केशपाशे विकृष्यते।। 29।।
भार्या तवैव पुरतः किं जुहोषि न लज्जसे। हन्यते पश्यतो यस्य भार्या पापैश्च शत्रुभिः।।30।।
मर्तव्यं तेन तत्रैव जीवितान्मरणं वरम्। हा मेघनाद ते माता क्लिश्यते बत वानरैः।। 31।।

krośantī karuṇaṃ dīnā jagāda daśakandharam/
nirlajjo'si parairevaṃ keśapāśe vikṛṣyate//
bhāryā tavaiva puratah kiṃ juhoṣi na lajjase/
hanyate paśyato yasya bhāryā pāpaiśca śatrubhiḥ//
martavyaṃ tena tatraiva jīvitānmaraṇaṃ varam/
hā meghanāda te mātā kliśyate bata vānaraiḥ//

She (Mandodari) became horrified, felt helpless and hapless, miserable and pitiful, and wept and wailed most woefully and inconsolably. She angrily rebuked the 10-headed one (Ravana), 'Alas! You are very shameless and have no self respect and dignity. Your enemies are pulling your wife by her hairs and you are trying to complete your fire sacrifice! Aren't you ashamed of yourself? A person whose wife is humiliated and insulted in public or tormented in anyway (literally, beaten, thrashed[a]) by his sinful enemies in front of the person who calls himself her husband while he watches, should die then and there. It is better for him to die then to live. Oh Meghnad! Today your mother is being tormented and humiliated and getting molested at the hands of the (humble, wretched and sinful) monkeys! (29-31).

त्वयि जीवति मे दुःखमीदृशं च कथं भवेत्। भार्या लज्जा च सन्त्यक्ता भर्त्रा मे जीविताशया।। 32।।
श्रुत्वा तद्देवितं राजा मन्दोदर्या दशाननः। उत्तस्थौ खड्गमादाय त्यज देवीमिति ब्रुवन्।।33।।

tvayi jīvati me duḥkhamīdṛśaṃ ca kathaṃ bhavet/
bhāryā lajjā ca santyaktā bhartrā me jīvitāśayā//
śrutvā taddevitaṃ rājā mandodaryā daśānanaḥ/
uttasthau khadgamādāya tyaja devīmiti bruvan//

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(Oh son!) If you had been alive, why would I have had to suffer so much? My husband has turned his face away from shame and his wife in order to save his own life (by completing the fire sacrifice and appeasing the goddess Nikumbhi)' (32).

Hearing this taunting and distressed lament of Mandodari, the 10-headed king lost his patience, stood up with a sword (in resentment, dismay, disgust and indignation), saying 'Oh! Leave this lady alone' (33).

जघानाङ्गदमव्यग्रः कटिदेशे दशाननः। तदोत्सृज्य ययुः सर्वे विध्वंस्य हवनं महत्।। 34।।
रामपार्श्वमुपागम्य तस्थुः सर्वे प्रहर्षिताः।। 35।।

jaghānāṅgadamavyagraḥ kaṭideśe daśānanaḥ /
tadotsṛjya yayuḥ sarve vidhvaṃsya havanaṃ mahat //
rāmapārśvamupāgamya tasthuḥ sarve praharṣitāḥ //

As soon as he got up, the 10-headed one (Ravana) kicked Angad on the small of his back. Meanwhile, all other monkeys ransacked and defiled his fire sacrifice, and departed immediately from there (34). All of them presented themselves before Sri Ram most cheerfully and jubilantly (35).

[Note :—This establishes the intent of the outrageous, disgraceful and indecent behaviour of the monkeys as described in verse nos. 24-28. It was not to violate the chastity or modesty of Ravana's women, but was a tactic of war. Though disgusting and disparaging to his otherwise immaculate reputation, it was thought necessary by Angad, because otherwise Ravana's fire sacrifice could not have been interfered with.]

रावणस्तु ततो भार्यामुवाच परिसान्त्वयन्। दैवाधीनमिदं भद्रे जीवता किं न दृश्यते।
त्यज शोकं विशालाक्षी ज्ञानमालम्ब्य निश्चितम्।। 36।।
अज्ञानप्रभवः शोकः शोको ज्ञानविनाशकृत्। अज्ञानप्रभवाहन्धीः शरीरादिष्वनात्मसु।। 37।।

rāvaṇastu tato bhāryāmuvāca parisāntvayan /
daivādhīnamidaṃ bhadre jīvatā kiṃ na dṛśyate /
tyaja śokaṃ viśālākṣi jñānamālambya niścitam //
ajñānaprabhavaḥ śokaḥ śoko jñānavināśakṛt /
ajñānaprabhavāhandhīḥ śarīrādiṣvanātmasu //

Ravana consoled his wife and said, 'Oh Bhadre (oh the gentle, chaste lady)! All this sorrow and joy are dependent upon destiny—is this not visible (or apparent, obvious) to a living being? So, oh the

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broad-eyed one! Relying on (or realising, becoming aware of) this established wisdom and knowledge, you must stop lamenting or regretting and feeling remorseful and sorrowful (36).

Sorrows, remorse, miseries, consternations, gloom, dismay, grief, mourning etc. (called 'Shok') have their origin (or cause) in ignorance or unawareness of the truth and reality as well as in the absence of wisdom (called 'Agyan'), and they in turn destroy wisdom, discrimination, intelligence and rationale thinking (called 'Gyan').

Having the notion of having ego and pride in the gross body and other perishable things of the gross world which are 'non-Atma', i.e. those that are non-eternal, non-truth, non-conscious and perishable, a sense (feeling, perception) of belonging that pertains to the body as well as to the external world as depicted by the words 'me, I, mine, my' etc. in relation to them, is also due to ignorance and absence of wisdom and truthful knowledge of what constitutes of the Reality. [That is, since the body and the world in which it lives are gross, non-conscious, perishable and non-eternal, to have any sense of pride in them is nothing else but a display of utter ignorance of the reality. By getting attached to this ignorance and thinking that the body and the world are real, a creature allows himself to get sucked in the vortex of sorrows and miseries that pertain to them. Otherwise, there is no such notion as sorrow and misery with the Atma which is eternally blissful and pure consciousness personified.] (37).

तन्मूलः पुत्रदारादिसम्बन्धः संसृतिस्ततः। हर्षशोकभयक्रोधलोभमोहस्पृहादयः॥ 38॥
अज्ञानप्रभवा ह्येते जन्ममृत्युजरादयः। आत्मा तु केवलं शुद्धो व्यतिरिक्तो ह्यलेपकः॥ 39॥

tanmūlaḥ putradārādisambandhaḥ saṃsṛtistataḥ /
harṣaśokabhayakrodhalobhamohaspṛhādayaḥ //
ajñānaprabhavā hyete janmamṛtyujarādayaḥ /
ātmā tu kevalaṃ śuddho vyatirikto hyalepakaḥ //

This false ego or sense of belonging or identification of the pure conscious Atma or soul with the gross body and the external world is at the root of all illusions that one has about a son, a wife and other relations. [That is, all these relations are deceptive.]

The erroneous belief in the actual existence of these relationships lead to all types of worldly attachments, which in turn are the cause of all types joys and happiness, all types of grief, sorrows, regrets,

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remorse, gloom, miseries and lamentations, all types of fears and consternations, all shades of angers, wrathfulness, ill-temper, vengeance, animosity, hatred, ferocity etc., all types of greed, avarice, yearnings and rapacity, all types of attachments, infatuations and endearments, and all types of desires, longings, wistfulness and wishes etc. (38).

The different stages of life marked by birth, death and decay etc. are all due to 'Agyan' (ignorance, lack of wisdom and truthful knowledge). This is because 'Atma' (the pure, truthful consciousness, microcosmic soul or pure self) is the one of its kind (for it is a unique and matchless entity that is only one of its kind, without a parallel or duplicate), it is absolutely pristine pure, unadulterated, uncorrupt and divine in all respects, it is separate, distinct and different from everything else in existence, and it is without any attachments, any bondages, any companions or relationships of any kind (39).

[Note—One of the reasons why the Atma is able to remain pure and uncorrupt is that it is alone and has no company, because if it had any, then it is natural that it would be influenced by its company. By remaining aloof from attachments of all kinds, it is able to maintain its purity and distinctiveness.]

आनन्दरूपो ज्ञानात्मा सर्वभावविवर्जितः। न संयोगो वियोगो वा विद्यते केनचित्सतः।। 40।।
एवं ज्ञात्वा स्वमात्मानं त्यज शोकमनिन्दिते। इदानीमेव गच्छामि हत्वा रामं सलक्ष्मणम्।।41।।
आगमिष्यामि नोचेन्मां दारयिष्यति सायकैः। श्रीरामो वज्रकल्पैश्च ततो गच्छामि तत्पदम्।।42।।

ānandarūpo jñānātmā sarvabhāvavivarjitaḥ /
na saṃyogo viyogo vā vidyate kenacitsataḥ //
evaṃ jñātvā samātmānaṃ tyaja śokamanindite /
idānīmeva gacchāmi hatvā rāmaṃ salakṣmaṇam //
āgamiṣyāmi nocenmāṃ dārayiṣyati sāyakaiḥ /
śrīrāmo vajrakalpaiśca tato gacchāmi tatpadam //

That Atma is an embodiment of pure bliss, peace, tranquility and happiness; it is pure and has truthful knowledge and wisdom; and it is free from all feelings, emotions, notions or sentiments. That image/embodiment of 'eternal truth' does not have a union or separation with anybody or anything (40).

Oh the one who has no taints, blemishes and ill fames! You should forsake sorrows, lamentations, grieving, mourning and gloom of all kind! Realise the true nature of your Atma or soul, and become cheerful.

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I am going right now—either I shall return after killing (overcoming and defeating) Sri Ram along with Laxman (41), or Sri Ram will perforate me and cut me into pieces by his arrows which are as strong as Vajra (Indra's weapon). Then I shall attain his supreme stature (i.e. I shall attain emancipation and salvation by being one with his holy feet) (42).

[Note :—Verse nos. 36-42 can be called Ravana's Gospel for Mandodari.]

तदा त्वया मे कर्तव्या क्रिया मच्छासनात्प्रिये। सीतां हत्वा मया सार्धं त्वं प्रवेक्ष्यसि पावकम्।। 43 ।।
एवं श्रुत्वा वचस्तस्य रावणस्यातिदुःखिता। उवाच नाथ मे वाक्यं शृणु सत्यं तथा कुरु।।44।।

tadā tvayā me kartavyā kriyā macchāsanātpriye/
sītāṃ hatvā mayā sārdhaṃ tvaṃ pravekṣyasi pāvakam//
evaṃ śrutvā vacastasya rāvaṇasyātiduḥkhitā/
uvāca nātha me vākyaṃ śṛṇu satyaṃ tathā kuru//

[Expressing his last wish, in case he dies in the battle field, Ravana tells Mandodari—] 'Oh dear! By my commands (and as my last wish), you must do one last thing for me—you must kill Sita and enter the cremation fire with me (in case I am dead)' (43).

Hearing these words of Ravana, Mandodari became very distressed, dismayed and gloomy. She said distraught fully, 'Oh Lord! I tell you what is proper and truthful. Listen to it and do accordingly (i.e. pay heed to my last advise to you because there is no time to waste in procrastination and debates, and acting arrogantly and recklessly now) (44).

[Note :—(i) Nothing surprising in this wish of Ravana. This is a standard military strategy of despots and tyrants—let not the enemy get what is considered a prized victory. By getting rid of Sita, Ravana wished to ensure that Sri Ram would be wringing his hands in utmost disgust, abject frustration, untold distress and profound dismay after the initial euphoria of winning the battle when he finds out that Sita is dead. It would prove disastrous for Sri Ram—and inspite of having won physical victory over Ravana in the battle, he would have, in effect, ultimately lost the war! Further, he wished to ensure that Mandodari is not subjected to further insinuations, humiliations and torture when the invading army finds out that Sita— for whom the whole war took place in the first place— is no more. It is very possible that they would wreck their vengeance on Mandodari. Ravana's assumptions are not out of place after what Angad and his companions did to her to disrupt Ravana's fire sacrifices in verse nos. 24-28. Ravana feared for the worst. But as it eventually happened, Mandodari did not keep his last wish, neither of them. This is probably

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because Ravana had said so in a mad fit of disgust and rage, not with a cool and rational head. It was a reckless instruction. One is left to wonder the course the story of Sri Ram would have taken had Mandodari carried out Ravana's last wish of killing Sita and burning herself!

(ii) Please refer to verse nos. 55-61 below which clearly states the reason why Ravana did not pay heed to Mandodari's entreaty and advice to cease hostility. It also shows that he was certain of death, even determined to embrace it, and lays down the reasons why he wished Mandodari to die with him. He wished that all those who were associated with him must be killed in the presence of Sri Ram who was the supreme Lord himself. With this thinking as a backdrop of the war, one concludes that Ravana was being very wise and was thinking in terms of emancipation and salvation of the entire demon race and his own clan in all his actions and deeds. In fact, by getting the sinful demons killed at the hands of the Lord God (Sri Ram), he had ensured their spiritual well-being and eternal life. All their sins and vices were purged and they obtained deliverance from this mundane, sinful existence.]

शक्यो न राघवो जेतुं त्वया चान्यैः कदाचन। रामो देववरः साक्षात्प्रधानपुरुषेश्वरः।। 45।।
मत्स्यो भूत्वा पुरा कल्पे मनुं वैवस्वतं प्रभुः। ररक्ष सकलापद्भ्यो राघवो भक्तवत्सलः।।46।।

śakyo na rāghavo jetuṃ tvayā cānyaiḥ kadācana /
rāmo devavaraḥ sākṣātpradhānapuruṣeśvaraḥ //
matsyo bhūtvā purā kalpe manuṃ vaivasvataṃ prabhuḥ /
rarakṣa sakalāpadbhyo rāghavo bhaktavatsalaḥ //

Raghav (Sri Ram) cannot be conquered by you or anybody else at any time. Sri Ram is the supreme and the most exalted Lord, the chief supreme Purush (macrocosmic Soul or the Viraat Purush; the chief male aspect of creation), and Lord of Gods (45).

Raghav (Sri Ram), who is the beloved of his devotees and is beneficent, benevolent, magnanimous and munificent towards them, had assumed the form of the legendary fish and protected Vaivastamanu from all his troubles at the beginning of this Kalpa (46).

[Note :—One Kalpa = one day of Brahma which is equal to 4320×10^6 worldly or terrestrial years. The reference here is to the Matsya, literally the fish incarnation of Lord Vishnu at the end of one cycle of creation when the world was deluged in the doomsday flood. At that time, this Matsya had pulled the boat to save Manu from drowning, an event reminiscent of the Doomsday Flood and the Noah's Arc story in the Holy Bible.]

रामः कूर्मोऽभवत्पूर्वं लक्षयोजनविस्तृतः। समुद्रमथने पृष्ठे दधार कनकाचलम्।। 47।।

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हिरण्याक्षोऽतिदुर्वृत्तो हतोऽनेन महात्मना। क्रोडरूपेण वपुषा क्षोणीमुद्धरता क्वचित्।।48।।

rāmaḥ kūrmo'bhavatpūrvaṃ lakṣayojanavistṛtaḥ /
samudramathane pṛṣṭhe dadhāra kanakācalam //
hiraṇyākṣo'tidurvṛtto hato'nena mahātmanā /
kroḍarūpeṇa vapuṣā kṣoṇīmuddharatā kvacit //

Sri Ram was the one who had become (i.e. manifested himself as) the legendary tortoise with a body extending up to one lakh (hundred thousand) Yojans (i.e. 800 thousand miles appx.). At the time of the churning of the legendary ocean, it was he (the tortoise) who had borne the mountain called Sumeru on his back (47).

During another of the earlier (ancient) times, he had assumed the form of the legendary boar, and this great soul had slayed the most wicked, mischievous and pervert demon Hiranyaaksha while liberating the earth from his clutches (48).

त्रिलोककण्टकं दैत्यं हिरण्यकशिपुं पुरा। हतवान्नारसिंहेन वपुषा रघुनन्दनः।। 49।।
विक्रमैस्त्रिभिरेवासौ बलिं बद्ध्वा जगत्त्रयम्। आक्रम्यादात्सुरेन्द्राय भृत्याय रघुसत्तमः।।50।।

trilokakaṇṭakaṃ daityaṃ hiraṇyakaśipuṃ purā /
hatavānnārasiṃhena vapuṣā raghunandanaḥ //
vikramaistribhirevāsau baliṃ baddhvā jagattrayam /
ākramyādātsurendrāya bhṛtyāya raghusattamaḥ //

This Raghunandan (son of Raghu's clan i.e. Sri Ram) had killed the demon Hiranyakshipu, who was like a thorn for the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds), by assuming the body of half-man half-lion, called a Narsingh (49).

The same one who is the most exalted in Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) had tied king Vaali, measured the entire three worlds in his three steps, and returned it to his follower (servant, devotee, subordinate) Indra, the Lord of Gods (during his incarnation as the mendicant dwarf) (50).

राक्षसाः क्षत्रियाकारा जाता भूमेर्भरावहाः। तान्हत्वा बहुशो रामो भुवं जित्वा ह्यदान्मुनेः।।51।।
स एव साम्प्रतं जातो रघुवंशे परात्परः। भवदर्थे रघुश्रेष्ठे मानुषत्वमुपागतः।।52।।

rākṣasāḥ kṣatriyākārā jātā bhūmerbharāvahāḥ /
tānhatvā bahuśo rāmo bhuvaṃ jitvā hyadānmuneḥ //
sa eva sāmprataṃ jāto raghuvaṃśe parātparaḥ /
bhavadarthe raghuśreṣṭho mānuṣatvamupāgataḥ //

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When the demons assumed the form of Kshatriyas and tormented the earth with their tyrannical rule, then he, as Parashuram, had killed them many times in battle, and having won (or snatched) the earth from their domination (or clutches), he had handed it over to sage Kashyap (a Brahmin) (51).

Presently the same supreme, transcendental, eternal, formless, infinite, fathomless, almighty, unconquerable enigmatic Lord has manifested himself as a man in the clan of king Raghu as the best amongst his clan for your sake (i.e. as he had done in the earlier occasions when the tyranny of the haughty, reckless, dare-devil, pervert and evil demon clan had tormented the earth and its creatures, he had assumed these so many forms to eliminate them. Why don't you understand this? Why do you willingly jump in the jaws of death?) (52).

[Note :—Mandodari had not realised what was in the mind of her husband. She was not privy to his thoughts because he had determined to attain emancipation and salvation by the only way and means he new as a demon—to instigate Sri Ram so as to get himself willingly killed by him, and Sita was only used by him as an excuse, only as a means to force the Lord to come face to face with him. There is no doubt as to this when we consider his conversation with Marich (Aranya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 30-35), his instructions to demonesses (Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 65), Ravana's thoughts (Sundar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 15-19) when he heard of the slaying of Khar and Dushan in Aranya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 58-61, and, most clearly and unequivocally, in verse nos. 55-61 of this present Kand as is very clear in the narration which follows below :—]

तस्य भार्या किमर्थं वा ह्रता सीता वनाद्बलात्। मम पुत्रविनाशार्थं स्वस्यापि निधनाय च।। 53।।
इतः परं वा वैदेहीं प्रेषयस्व रघूत्तमे। विभीषणाय राज्यं तु दत्त्वा गच्छामहे वनम्।। 54।।

tasya bhāryā kimarthaṃ vā hṛtā sītā vanādbalāt /
mama putravināśārthaṃ svasyāpi nidhanāya ca //
itaḥ paraṃ vā vaidehīṃ preṣayasva raghūttame /
vibhīṣaṇāya rājyaṃ tu dattvā gacchāmahe vanam //

Why did you abduct his wife Sita from the Tapovan (Panchvati) to get my son killed and get yourself killed too? (53). (It is till not too late.) You should send Vaidehi (Sita) to the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) even now; then, crown Vibhishan on the throne (i.e. give him the kingdom of Lanka, and abdicate the throne), and then we (you and me) shall go to the forest (as Vanprastha—forest

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dwelling mendicants to spend the rest of our lives in penitence and austerities)' (54).

मन्दोदरीवचः श्रुत्वा रावणो वाक्यमब्रवीत्। कथं भद्रे रणे पुत्रान् भ्रातॄन् राक्षसमण्डलम्।। 55।।
घातयित्वा राघवेण जीवामि वनगोचरः। रामेण सह योत्स्यामि रामबाणैः सुशीघ्रगैः।।56।।
विदार्यमाणो यास्यामि तद्विष्णोः परमं पदम्। जानामि राघवं विष्णुं लक्ष्मीं जानामि जानकीम्।
ज्ञात्वैव जानकी सीता मयानीता वनाद्बलात्।। 57।।
रामेण निधनं प्राप्य यास्यामीति परं पदम्। विमुच्य त्वां तु संसारादमिष्यामि सह प्रिये।।58।।

mandodarīvacaḥ śrutvā rāvaṇo vākyamabravīt /
kathaṃ bhadre raṇe putrān bhrātṝn rākṣasamaṇḍalam //
ghātayitvā rāghaveṇa jīvāmi vanagocaraḥ /
rāmeṇa saha yotsyāmi rāmabāṇaiḥ suśīghragaiḥ //
vidāryamāṇo yāsyāmi tadviṣṇoḥ paramaṃ padam /
jānāmi rāghavaṃ viṣṇuṃ lakṣmīṃ jānāmi jānakīm /
jñātvaiva jānakī sītā mayānītā vanādbalāt //
rāmeṇa nidhanaṃ prāpya yāsyāmīti paraṃ padam /
vimucya tvāṃ tu saṃsārādgamiṣyāmi saha priye //

Hearing the words of Mandodari, Ravana said 'Oh noble lady! Having got my sons (i.e. Akshay Kumar, Meghnad etc.), brother (Kumbhakarn) and all the rest of the demon hordes slayed in the battle, how can I ever dream of spending my life in the forest as a forest dwelling mendicant? Now I shall also fight to the end with Sri Ram, and shall get wounded and pierced by his swift arrows, and as a result of which I shall go to that Vishnu's supreme abode! I realise and understand and recognise the fact that Raghav (Sri Ram) is Vishnu himself, and Janki (Sita) is Laxmi (consort of Vishnu) personified. And fully understanding it (or being well aware of it), I had forcefully, willingly, with due thought and purpose, had consciously brought Sita from the forest (55-57) so that I can die at the hands of Sri Ram, and as a consequence, attain his (Sri Ram's) supreme abode. Oh dear! Now leaving you behind, I shall make my exit from this entrapping, mundane, deluding, artificial world along with other demon warriors (58).

[Note :—This shows Ravan's firm resolve to get all the male demons of fighting age or all the adults die along with him. The question is 'what happened to the demonesses'? Well, the majority of them had been burnt in the fierce fire lit by Hanuman. See Sundar Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 43-44. As a result, only the righteous amongst the race of demons survived Sri Ram's war with Ravana, and they were ruled by Vibhishan. It would be wrong to surmise that all demons were bad, for we have already seen

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that there were many in his team who had tried their best to dissuade him.]

परानन्दमयी शुद्धा सेव्यते या मुमुक्षुभिः। तां गतिं तु गमिष्यामि हतो रामेण संयुगे।। 59।।
प्रक्षाल्य कल्मषाणीह मुक्तिं यास्यामि दुर्लभाम्।।60।।

parānandamayī śuddhā sevyate yā mumukṣubhiḥ /
tāṃ gatiṃ tu gamiṣyāmi hato rāmeṇa saṃyuge //
prakṣālya kalmaṣāṇīha muktiṃ yāsyāmi durlabhām //

The supreme state of pure, eternal bliss, peace and tranquility that the seekers/aspirants of emancipation and salvation enjoy, I shall get that rare stature by getting killed at the hands of Sri Ram (59).

In this manner, by washing (or purging, cleaning) all my sins, evils, misdeeds, perversions and misdemeanors, I shall achieve the rarest of rare state of being liberated from the cycle of birth and death in this mundane, deluding, entangling world (60).

क्लेशादिपञ्चकतरङ्गयुतं भ्रमाढ्यं दारात्मजाप्तधनबन्धुझषाभियुक्तम्।
और्वानलाभनिजरोषमनङ्गजालं संसारसागरमतीत्य हरिं व्रजामि।।61।।

kleśādipañcakataraṅgayutaṃ bhramāḍhyaṃ
dārātmajāptadhanabandhujhaṣābhiyuktam /
aurvānalābhanijaroṣamanaṅgajālaṃ
saṃsārasāgaramatītya hariṃ vrajāmi //

I shall cross the mundane, deluding, entangling world-like ocean which has (a) the five great tormentors[1] (representing troubles, tribulations, sorrows, anguish) as its waves, (b) the various misconceptions, illusions, delusions, deceptions, imposterings, deceits, frauds and other such fallacious, ill conceived and erroneous perceptions, conceptions and notions as its huge swirling whirlpools, (c) which has small and large fish in the form of so many relations such as a wife, sons, kith and kin, and other relations such as friends, compatriots and companions, as well as various riches, worldly wealth and prosperity, (d) where the great underground fire, called the 'Vadvaanal', which is perpetually burning under the ocean and continuously drying it up in a gradual manner, is represented by one's anger, wrathfulness, ill-temper, ferocity of demeanors, animosity, hatred and vengeance (which are regularly burning the heart of all the creatures in this creation), and (e) where the great in net in the form of Kaam (worldly desires, lust, avarice, passions, yearnings and

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infatuations) has been laid to trap the creature—I shall cross this most formidable and intractable ocean very easily and go near Lord Hari (i.e. I shall get deliverance and attain the supreme Lord himself)' (61).

[Note :—[1]The five 'tormenters' referred to in verse no. 61 are the following— (a) Avidya (ignorance); (b) Asmita (vanity, ego, pride, arrogance, hypocrisy and haughtiness; according to the philosophy of non-duality, to regard the Atma and the subtle body consisting of mind-intellect complex as one); (c) Raag (attachment, infatuation, desire etc.); (d) Dwesh (ill-will, enmity, malice, hatred, confrontationist attitude etc.) and (e) Abhinivesh (fear of death).

Verse nos. 55 to 61 are eye-openers. They explicitly tell that Ravana was well aware of what he was doing. His intention was noble to the core. The external tantrums that he had thrown were just to mislead other demons—otherwise they wouldn't have fought at all. Like a true benevolent king, he wanted all his men to share the largesse of emancipation and salvation which has literally come a begging to them to be accepted by them at their very doorstep. Please also refer to Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 31-42, 58-59.]

***

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 11

Sri Ram-Ravana war and Ravana's death

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

इत्युक्त्वा वचनं प्रेम्णा राज्ञीं मन्दोदरीं तदा। रावणः प्रययो योद्धुं रामेण सह संयुगे।।1।।
दृढं स्यन्दनमास्थाय वृतो घोरैर्निशाचरैः। चक्रैः षोडशभिर्युक्तं सवरूथं सकूबरम्।।2।।
पिशाचवदनैर्घोरैः खरैर्युक्तं भयावहम्। सर्वास्त्रशस्त्रसहितं सर्वोपस्करसंयुतम्।।3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

ityuktvā vacanaṃ premṇā rājñīṃ mandodarīṃ tadā /
rāvaṇaḥ prayayau yoddhuṃ rāmeṇa saha saṃyuge //
dṛḍhaṃ syandanamāsthāya vṛto ghoraiśācaraiḥ /
cakraiḥ ṣoḍaśabhiryuktaṃ savarūthaṃ sakūbaram //
piśācavadanairghoraiḥ kharairyuktaṃ bhayāvaham /
sarvāstraśastrasahitaṃ sarvopaskarasaṃyutam //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Having affectionately consoled the chief queen Mandodari as described above, Ravana started off for the

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battle field to fight with Sri Ram (1). He mounted a sturdy and strong chariot surrounded by most formidable, ferocious and fierce demons. That chariot had sixteen wheels, protective reinforced armour called a 'Baruth', and a 'Kubar' (a part of the chariot which is used to tie all the reins of the harnessed animals to a single peg) (2).

Horrifying donkeys—which had faces like that of Satan or Devil—were yoked to it. This made the chariot appear most grotesque, very fearful, inauspicious and terrible to behold. It was provided with all types of arms and armaments fit for a fierce war, and it was well endowed with all the paraphernalia and accoutrements needed for war (3).

निश्चक्रामाथ सहसा रावणो भीषणाकृतिः। आयान्तं रावणं दृष्ट्वा भीषणं रणकर्कशम्।। 4।।
सन्त्रस्ताभूत्तदा सेना वानरी रामपालिता।। 5।।

niścakrāmātha sahasā rāvaṇo bhīṣaṇākṛtiḥ /
āyāntaṃ rāvaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā bhīṣaṇaṃ raṇakarkaśam //
santrastābhūttadā senā vānarī rāmapālitā //

In this manner, Ravana came out of the city presenting a most formidable, horrific, awe inspiring and scary sight. Seeing that the most scaring, fierce, ferocious, ruthless and battle-hardened war veteran Ravana is approaching (4), the monkey army, though under Sri Ram's protection, nevertheless became extremely terrified (5).

हनूमानथ चोत्प्लुत्य रावणं योद्धुमाययौ। आगत्य हनुमान् रक्षोवक्षस्यतुलविक्रमः।। 6।।
मुष्टिबन्धं दृढं बद्ध्वा ताडयामास वेगतः। तेन मुष्टिप्रहारेण जानुभ्यामपतद्रथे।। 7।।

hanūmānatha cotplutya rāvaṇaṃ yoddhumāyayau /
āgatya hanumān rakṣovakṣasyatulavikramaḥ //
muṣṭibandhaṃ dṛḍhaṃ baddhvā tāḍayāmāsa vegataḥ /
tena muṣṭiprahāreṇa jānubhyāmapatadrathe //

Then Hanuman leapt in front to face and fight with Ravana head on. As soon as he came there (in front of Ravana), the most valiant and valorous Hanuman (6) clenched his fists firmly and hit him hard swiftly on the chest. No sooner had he been hit by that fist, he (Ravana) fell down on his knees on the chariot (7).

मूर्च्छितोऽथ मुहूर्तेन रावणः पुनरुत्थितः। उवाच च हनूमन्तं शूरोऽसि मम सम्मतः।। 8।।
हनूमानाह तं धिङ्मां यस्त्वं जीवसि रावण। त्वं तावन्मुष्टिना वक्षो मम ताडय रावण।। 9।।

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mūrchito'tha muhūrtena rāvaṇaḥ punarutthitaḥ /
uvāca ca hanūmantaṃ śūro'si mama sammataḥ //
hanūmānāha taṃ dhiṅmāṃ yastvaṃ jīvasi rāvaṇa /
tvaṃ tāvanmuṣṭinā vakṣo mama tāḍaya rāvaṇa //

He remained unconscious for 1 Muhurt (literally for a short while) and then regained consciousness once again. Then he said to Hanuman, 'Oh Hanuman! I accept that you are very strong, agile, powerful, potent, valiant, valorous, bold and courageous' (8).

Hanuman replied, 'Oh Ravana! It is shameful for me that inspite of my hitting you with my punch (fist), you have still survived. Alright, now you hit me on my chest (9).

पश्चान्मया हतः प्राणान्मोक्ष्यसे नात्र संशयः। तथेति मुष्टिना वक्षो रावणेनापि ताडितः।। 10।।
विघूर्णमाननयनः किञ्चित्कश्मलमाययौ। संज्ञामवाप्य कपिराड् रावणं हन्तुमुद्यतः।।11।।

paścānmayā hataḥ prāṇānmokṣyase nātra saṃśayaḥ /
tatheti muṣṭinā vakṣo rāvaṇenāpi tāḍitaḥ //
vighūrṇamānānanayanaḥ kiñcitkaśmalamāyayau /
saṃjñāmavāpya kapirāḍ rāvaṇaṃ hantumudyataḥ //

After that there is no doubt that you shall die with my next fist with which I shall hit you (when I retaliate)'. Then Ravana (accepted the challenge and) said 'alright' and hit Hanuman hard with his fist on his chest (10). Hanuman had braced himself for the blow, but when he was hit, his (Hanuman's) eyes went round in circles, making him feel giddy; he slightly swooned and became a little disoriented and uneasy for a while. Then, when he returned back to normal and recovered himself, the great monkey prepared himself to counter-attack Ravana (11).

ततोऽन्यत्र गतो भीत्या रावणो राक्षसाधिपः। हनूमानङ्गदश्चैव नलो नीलस्तथैव च।। 12।।
चत्वारः समवेत्याग्रे दृष्ट्वा राक्षसपुङ्गवान्। अग्निवर्णं तथा सर्परोमाणं खड्गरोमकम्।।13।।
तथा वृश्चिकरोमाणं निर्जघ्नुः क्रमशोऽसुरान्। चत्वारश्चतुरो हत्वा राक्षसान् भीमविक्रमान्।
सिंहनादं पृथक् कृत्वा रामपार्श्वमुपागताः।। 14।।

tato'nyatra gato bhītyā rāvaṇo rākṣasādhipaḥ /
hanūmānaṅgadaścaiva nalo nīlastathaiva ca //
catvāraḥ samavetyāgre dṛṣṭvā rākṣasapuṅgavān /
agnivarṇaṃ tathā sarparomāṇaṃ khaṅgaromakam //

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tathā vṛścikaromāṇaṃ nirjaghnuḥ kramaśo'surān /
catvāraścaturo hatvā rākṣasān bhīmavikramān /
siṃhanādaṃ pṛthak kṛtvā rāmapārśvamupāgatāḥ //

The king of demons Ravana became exceedingly astonished, apprehensive and terrified (astonished because he was surprised that Hanuman recovered so fast, and apprehensive and terrified because he knew what Hanuman could do, for he had witnessed the burning of Lanka). He made good his escape from there to some other place (to escape Hanuman's wrath and subsequent humiliating defeat, especially when all the demons were watching intently). Hanuman, Angad, Nal and Neel presently found (12) four demons who were the best amongst the rest of them and were named Agnivarna, Sarparoma, Khangroma (13) and Vrishchikarom respectively, standing in front of them. Then those four monkeys killed those most valiant and valorous demons one by one. Thereafter, roaring individually and simultaneously, they came and stood in front of Sri Ram (14).

ततः क्रुद्धो दशग्रीवः सन्दश्य दशनच्छदम्।। 15।।
विवृत्य नयने क्रूरो राममेवान्वधावत। दशग्रीवो रथस्थस्तु रामं वज्रोपमैः शरैः।। 16।।
आजघान महाघोरैर्धाराभिरिव तोयदः। रामस्य पुरतः सर्वान्वानरानपि विव्यधे।। 17।।

tato kruddho daśagrīvaḥ sandaśya daśanacchadam //
vivṛtya nayane krūro rāmamevānvadhāvata /
daśagrīvo rathasthastu rāmaṃ vajropamaiḥ śaraiḥ //
ājaghāna mahāghorairdhārābhiriva toyadaḥ /
rāmasya purataḥ sarvānvānarānapi vivyathe //

After this, the 10-headed one (Ravana) became very angry and furious; he bit all his ten lips with his teeth (in indignation, resentment and dismay) (15). That cruel and ferocious fellow glared viciously at Sri Ram, and lunged at him furiously. The 10-headed one (Ravana) was on a chariot, while Sri Ram was on foot, and the former began raining (peppering, showering) a hail of Vajra-like (sharp, strong, piercing, potent and invincible) arrows on Sri Ram (16) just like clouds rain torrential rain on the ground. He wounded all the monkeys even as Sri Ram watched (17).

ततः पावकसङ्काशैः शरैः काञ्चनभूषणैः। अभ्यवर्षद्रणे रामो दशग्रीवं समाहितः।। 18।।
रथस्थं रावणं दृष्ट्वा भूमिष्ठं रघुनन्दनम्। आहूय मातलिं शक्रो वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 19।।

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tataḥ pāvakasaṅkāśaiḥ śaraiḥ kāñcanabhūṣaṇaiḥ /
abhyavarṣadraṇe rāmo daśagrīvaṃ samāhitaḥ //
rathasthaṃ rāvaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā bhūmiṣṭhaṃ raghunandanam /
āhūya mātaliṃ śakro vacanaṃ cedamabravīt //

Then Sri Ram became alert and began showering gold-plated arrows (i.e. arrows which were as radiant as the colour of gold and), which were glowing like fire, at the demon (18).

When Indra saw that Ravana was on a chariot while Raghunandan (Sri Ram) was on the ground (i.e. on foot), he called his charioteer Matli and said (19)—

रथेन मम भूमिष्ठं शीघ्रं याहि रघूत्तमम्। त्वरितं भूतलं गत्वा कुरु कार्यं ममानघ।। 20।।
एवमुक्तोऽथ तं नत्वा मातलिर्देवसारथिः। ततो हयैश्च संयोज्य हरितैः स्यन्दनोत्तमम्।। 21।।
स्वर्गाज्जयार्थं रामस्य ह्युपचक्राम मातलिः। प्राञ्जलिर्देवराजेन प्रेषितोऽस्मि रघूत्तम।। 22।।

rathena mama bhūmiṣṭhaṃ śīghraṃ yāhi raghūttamam /
tvaritaṃ bhūtalaṃ gatvā kuru kāryaṃ mamānagha //
evamukto'tha taṃ natvā mātalirdevasārathiḥ /
tato hayaiśca saṃyojya haritaiḥ syandanottamam //
svargājjayārthaṃ rāmasya hyupacakrāma mātaliḥ /
prāñjalirdevarājena preṣito'smi raghūttama //

'Oh Anagh (the sinless and faultless one)! Look, the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) is standing on the ground. Take my chariot and go to the earth immediately, and do this work for me' (20).

Having received his orders, the charioteer of the Gods, Matli, bowed before him, yoked green coloured horses to his excellent chariot (21), and came down from the heavens for the purpose of Sri Ram's victory. He presented himself before him (Sri Ram) and said to him with joined palms as a gesture of respect and submission, 'Oh the most exalted of the Raghus! I have been sent by the king of Gods (Indra) to be at your service (22).

[Note :—The epithet of 'Anagh' should not be taken too literally. It is simply a polite, a civilized and courteous manner of addressing a good person.]

रथोऽयं देवराजस्य विजयाय तव प्रभो। प्रेषितश्च महाराज धनुरैन्द्रं च भूषितम्।। 23।।
अभेद्यं कवचं खड्गं दिव्यतूणीयुगं तथा। आरुह्य च रथं राम रावणं जहि राक्षसम्।। 24।।
मया सारथिना देव वृत्रं देव पतिर्यथा। इत्युक्तस्तं परिक्रम्य नमस्कृत्य रथोत्तमम्।। 25।।

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ratho'yaṃ devarājasya vijayāya tava prabho /
preṣitaśca mahārāja dhanuraindraṃ ca bhūṣitam //
abhedyaṃ kavacaṃ khaḍgaṃ divyatūṇīyugaṃ tathā /
āruhya ca rathaṃ rāma rāvaṇaṃ jahi rākṣasam //
mayā sārathinā deva vṛtraṃ devapatiryathā /
ityuktastaṃ parikramya namaskṛtya rathottamam //

Oh Lord! This is the king of God's chariot, and he has sent it for your victory. Oh Lord! He has also sent the 'Indra's bow' (23), impregnable armour, a sword and two divine quivers. Oh Sri Ram! Mount this chariot and slay the demon Ravana (24) even as the Lord of Gods (Indra) had killed the demon Vrittasur with me as his charioteer'.

When Matli had said so, Sri Ram circumambulated the excellent chariot and bowed before it (to show his respect to the divine chariot as well as to show his own humility and a sense of thanks giving to the Gods) (25).

आरुरोह रथं रामो लोकाँलक्ष्म्या नियोजयन्। ततोऽभवन्महायुद्धं भैरवं रोमहर्षणम्।। 26।।
महात्मनो राघवस्य रावणस्य च धीमतः। आग्नेयेन च आग्नेयं दैवं दैवेन राघवः।। 27।।
अस्त्रं राक्षसराजस्य जघान परमास्त्रवित्। ततस्तु ससृजे घोरं राक्षसं चास्त्रमस्त्रवित्।
क्रोधेन महताविष्टो रामस्योपरि रावणः।। 28।।

āruroha rathaṃ rāmo lokāṁllakṣmyā niyojanam /
tato'bhavanmahāyuddhaṃ bhairavaṃ romaharṣaṇam //
mahātmano rāghavasya rāvaṇasya ca dhīmataḥ /
āgneyena ca āgneyaṃ daivaṃ daivena rāghavaḥ //
astraṃ rākṣasarājasya jaghāna paramāstravit /
tatastu sasṛje ghoraṃ rākṣasaṃ cāstramastravit /
krodhena mahatāviṣṭo rāmasyopari rāvaṇaḥ //

Sri Ram mounted the chariot (of the Gods sent by Indra), and this magnificent sight provided the entire world with the much needed sign of auspiciousness, hope, good fortunes and the final turn of tide for the all round good of all.

[The final duel between Sri Ram and Ravana started now—] Then the final spectacularly fierce, ruthlessly fought, and no-holds-barred great duel, which was chillingly exciting, nail biting, hair raising and thrilling to the core so much so as to raise goose bums in all those

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who witnessed it (26), commenced between the great and most exalted Raghav (Sri Ram) and the wise and intelligent Ravana[1]. Raghav (Sri Ram)—who was very expert and adept in the use of weapons—cut down Ravana's 'Agneyastra' (a missile-like weapon tipped with fire) with a matching 'Agneyastra' and 'Devastra' (a weapon shot after invoking separate patron Gods to make it very potent), and other similar weapons. Then Ravana—who was well versed in the art of weapon use—became very furious, and he shot a most formidable 'Rakshashastra' (a weapon used by demons and specially meant to be used by them) at Sri Ram (27-28).

[Note—[1]We must note the adjectives used to describe Ravana—'wise and intelligent'. Of course he was, otherwise he would not have said such words of wisdom which he had spoken previously on many occasions when he resisted all attempts to avoid the war, and swept aside all advice given to him by his wise advisors. His main aim was liberation and deliverance from this evil body, and towards this end he would listen to no body whose advice would not let it happen. Wouldn't such a man be called wise and intelligent? He was so prudent that he even ensured that the entire demon race and his own clan got the same emancipation and salvation that he reserved for himself by getting himself killed by the supreme Lord, especially the privilege of having him stand in front at the last moments of life and closing the eyes forever watching the Lord in front and having the mind firmly riveted in his thoughts, a fortune denied to even great souls who yearn to have a divine sight of the Lord at the time of death, but do not get it!]

रावणस्य धनुर्मुक्ताः सर्पा भूत्वा महाविषाः। शराः काञ्चनपुङ्खाभा राघवं परितोऽपतन्॥29॥
तैः शरैः सर्पवदनैर्वमद्भिरनलं मुखैः। दिशश्च विदिशश्चैव व्याप्तास्तत्र तदाभवन्॥30॥

rāvaṇasya dhanurmuktāḥ sarpā bhūtvā mahāviṣāḥ/
śarāḥ kāñcanapuṅkhābhā rāghavaṃ parito'patan//
taiḥ śaraiḥ sarpavadanairvamadbhiranalaṃ mukhaiḥ/
diśaśca vidiśaścaiva vyāptāstatra tadābhavan//

The arrows shot from the bow of Ravana appeared to have fins made of golden strands (i.e. they resembled golden feathers), and they fell all around Raghav assuming the form of very poisonous and fierce snakes (29). All the directions of the compass were saturated by the numerous weapons and arrows shot by Ravana which had sizzling flames of fire leaping out and spurting forward from their tips which resembled the mouth of dragons (30).

[Note :—The arrows shot by Ravana transformed themselves by magical

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powers into poisonous dragons squirting flame, brimstone and fire, and they covered the ground around Sri Ram in the battle field.]

रामः सर्पास्ततो दृष्ट्वा समन्तात्परिपूरितान्। सौपर्णमस्त्रं तद्घोरं पुरः प्रावर्तयद्रणे।। 31।।
रामेण मुक्तास्ते बाणा भूत्वा गरुडरूपिणः। चिच्छिदुः सर्पबाणांस्तान्समन्तात्सर्पशत्रवः।।32।।

rāmaḥ sarpāṃstato dṛṣṭvā samantātparipūritān /
sauparṇamastraṃ tadghoraṃ puraḥ prāvartayadraṇe //
rāmeṇa muktāste bāṇā bhūtvā garuḍarūpiṇaḥ /
cicchiduḥ sarpabāṇāṃstānsamantātsarpaśatravaḥ //

When Sri Ram observed that the whole area (of the battle field) is covered by serpents resembling fierce dragons (because the arrows shot by Ravana had metamorphosed into poisonous, fiery dragons), he shot the most potent and formidable weapon called 'Sauparna Astra' (which was also known by the name of Garudastra because on being shot, it metamorphosed into an eagle or heron and gobbled up the snakes) (31). Those arrows launched by Sri Ram transformed themselves into Garud (the legendary eagle or heron) and began cutting down (i.e. countering and acting as an antidote to) the serpent-like or dragon-like magical arrows spread everywhere (32).

अस्त्रे प्रतिहते युद्धे रामेण दशकन्धरः। अभ्यवर्षत्ततो रामं घोराभिः शरवृष्टिभिः।। 33।।
ततः पुनः शरानीकै राममक्लिष्टकारिणम्। अर्दयित्वा तु घोरेण मातलिं प्रत्यविध्यत।।34।।

astre pratihate yuddhe rāmeṇa daśakandharaḥ /
abhyavarṣattato rāmaṃ ghorābhiḥ śaravṛṣṭibhiḥ //
tataḥ punaḥ śarānīkai rāmamakliṣṭakāriṇam /
ardayitvā tu ghoreṇa mātaliṃ pratyavidhyata //

When the 10-headed one (Ravana) found that all his armaments and magical weapons have been nullified and made ineffective by Sri Ram in the battle, he showered another fierce hail of arrows on the latter (33). Then, once again, he caused immense consternation and vexation to Sri Ram by pestering and peppering him with sharp arrows, besides wounding his charioteer Matli (34).

पातयित्वा रथोपस्थे रथकेतुं च काञ्चनम्। ऐन्द्रानश्वानभ्यहनद्रावणः क्रोधमूर्च्छितः।। 35।।
विषेदुर्देवगन्धर्वाश्चारणाः पितरस्तथा। आर्त्ताकारं हरिं दृष्ट्वा व्यथिताश्च महर्षयः।।36।।

pātayitvā rathopasthe rathaketuṃ ca kāñcanam /
aindrānaśvānabhyahanadrāvaṇaḥ krodhamūrchitaḥ //
viṣedurdevagandharvāścāraṇāḥ pitarastathā /
ārttākāraṃ hariṃ dṛṣṭvā vyathitāśca maharṣayaḥ //

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Not satisfied by it, Ravana—who was mad with anger and overwhelmed with indignation—severed the golden flag (standard) of Sri Ram's chariot and fell it on the rear side, and wounded the horses of Indra (35). Seeing that Hari (here meaning Sri Ram) was in great trouble, the Gods, Gandharvas (celestial demigods), Charans (celestial bards) and Pittars (dead ancestors in spirit form) were overshadowed with remorse and gloom, while the great sages, seers and hermits lamented and regretted internally in their hearts (36).

व्यथिता वानरेन्द्राश्च बभूवः सविभीषणाः। दशास्यो विंशतिभुजः प्रगृहीतशरासनः॥ 37॥
ददृशे रावणस्तत्र मैनाक इव पर्वतः। रामस्तु भ्रुकुटिं बद्ध्वा क्रोधसंरक्तलोचनः॥ 38॥
कोपं चकार सदृशं निर्दहन्निव राक्षसम्। धनुरादाय देवेन्द्रधनुराकारमद्भुतम्॥ 39॥
गृहीत्वा पाणिना बाणं कालानलसमप्रभम्। निर्दहन्निव चक्षुर्भ्यां ददृशे रिपुमन्तिके॥ 40॥

vyathitā vānarendrāśca babhūvuḥ savibhīṣaṇāḥ/
daśāsyo viṃśatibhujaḥ pragṛhītaśarāsanaḥ//
dadṛśe rāvaṇastatra maināka iva parvataḥ/
rāmastu bhrukuṭiṃ baddhvā krodhasaṃraktalocanaḥ//
kopaṃ cakāra sadṛśaṃ nirdahanniva rākṣasam/
dhanurādāya devendradhanurākāramadbhutam//
gṛhītvā pāṇinā bāṇaṃ kālānalasamaprabham/
nirdahanniva cakṣurbhyāṃ dadṛśe ripumantike//

All the commanders and chief of the monkey hordes as well as Vibhishan became very worried and confounded. At that time, Ravana with his ten heads and twenty arms holding bows and arrows (37) looked formidably awesome and colossus like the Mainak mountain. Sri Ram's eyes became red with furious anger, his brows curved like a bow in extreme annoyance (38), and fiercely glaring at the demon as if he would burn him to ashes, he (Sri Ram) picked up another remarkable, magnificent, majestic and strange bow—which was as effective and similar to the one belonging to Indra[1] (39)—in his hands, and taking up an arrow which was as splendorous, radiant and glowing as the fire of death, he looked at his enemy with fierce eyes as if he would reduce him to ashes and finish him off by his glance (40).

[Note—[1]The bow sent by Indra had proved ineffective against the onslaught of Ravana. It is enough evidence why he was able to suppress the Gods.]

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पराक्रमं दर्शयितुं तेजसा प्रज्वलन्निव। प्रचक्रमे कालरूपी सर्वलोकस्य पश्यतः।। 41।।
विकृष्य चापं रामस्तु रावणं प्रतिविध्य च। हर्षयन्वानरानीकं कालान्तक इवाबभौ।। 42।।

parākramaṃ darśayituṃ tejasā prajvalanniva /
pracakrame kālarūpī sarvalokasya paśyataḥ //
vikṛṣya cāpaṃ rāmastu rāvaṇaṃ pratividhya ca /
harṣayanvānarānīkaṃ kālāntaka ivābabhau //

The death-like Sri Ram (i.e. Sri Ram who resembled the death God Kaal himself) literally became ignited by his own majestic and stupendous powers and energy called 'Tej' (that is, the great energy and powers which he had in him were now effusing or emanating from him like a bright halo or a brilliant glow radiating in all the directions like the heat and light coming out from a super-heated piece of metal). He began to display (i.e. showcase) his immense and formidable prowess, powers, potent, valour, strength, courage and might in front of the whole world (41).

He pulled the string of his bow and perforated Ravana with his arrows. He looked adorable and as awe-inspiring and formidable as Kaal, the God of death himself. This sight instilled confidence and renewed vigour and hope in all the monkeys who felt cheerful, exhilarant and hopeful of victory once again (42).

क्रुद्धं रामस्य वदनं दृष्ट्वा शत्रुं प्रधावतः। तत्रसुः सर्वभूतानि चचाल च वसुन्धरा।। 43।।
रामं दृष्ट्वा महारौद्रमुत्पातांश्च सुदारुणान्। त्रस्तानि सर्वभूतानि रावणं चाविशद्भयम्।। 44।।

kruddhaṃ rāmasya vadanaṃ dṛṣṭvā śatruṃ pradhāvataḥ /
tatrasuḥ sarvabhūtāni cacāla ca vasundharā //
rāmaṃ dṛṣṭvā mahāraudramutpātāṃśca sudāruṇān /
trastāni sarvabhūtāni rāvaṇaṃ cāviśadbhayam //

Looking at the fearsome angry face (i.e. countenance and demeanors) of Sri Ram while he attacked the enemy, all the creatures became terrified even as the earth shook and trembled (43).

Observing the most ferocious, uncompromising and extremely wrathful countenance of Sri Ram as well as these greatly ominous, disastrous, violent, grave and potently dangerous developments, panic, dismay and distress overcame all the creatures of the world, while terror and panic took firm roots in the heart of Ravana (44).

विमानस्थाः सुरगणाः सिद्धगन्धर्वकिन्नराः। ददृशुः सुमहायुद्धं लोकसंवर्तकोपमम्।

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ऐन्द्रमस्त्रं समादाय रावणस्य शिरोऽच्छिनत्।।45।।
मूर्धानो रावणस्याथ बहवो रुधिरोक्षिताः। गगनात्प्रपतन्ति स्म तालादिव फलानि हि।।46।।

vimānasthā suragaṇāḥ siddhagandharvakinnarāḥ/
dadṛśuḥ sumahāyuddhaṃ lokasaṃvartakopamam/
aindramastraṃ samādāya rāvaṇasya śiro'cchinat//
mūrdhāno rāvaṇasyātha bahavo rudhirokṣitāḥ/
gaganātprapatanti sma tālādiva phalāni hi//

At that time all the Gods, Siddhas (mystics), Gandharvas (celestial demigods; celestial musicians), Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers; a form of demigod with the head of a horse) etc. rode their air vehicles and watched this great and epic war, which resembled the all-hell-broke-loose scenario of doomsday, unfolding before them. Meanwhile, he (Sri Ram) shot the 'Aendrastra' (a weapon used by Indra) and chopped off the head of Ravana (45).

The numerous blood-soaked heads of Ravana began falling from the sky just like the fruits of the palm tree fall from it (when they are ripe) (46).

न दिनं न च वै रात्रिर्न सन्ध्या न दिशोऽपि वा। प्रकाशन्ते न तद्रूपं दृश्यते तत्र सङ्गरे।।47।।
ततो रामो बभूवाथ विस्मयाविष्टमानसः। शतमेकोत्तरं छिन्नं शिरसां चैकवर्चसाम्।।48।।

na dinaṃ na ca vai rātrirna sandhyāṃ na diśo'pi vā/
prakāśante na tadrūpaṃ dṛśyate tatra saṅgare//
tato rāmo babhūvātha vismayāviṣṭamānasaḥ/
śatamekottaraṃ chinnaṃ śirasāṃ caikavarcasām//

At that moment, day, night, evening, directions etc.—nothing was clearly visible in the battle field so much so that even his (Ravana's) form was not discernible properly (only the cut-off heads were seen raining down in all the directions like hail, while the dripping blood from those severed heads rained down like rain, thereby obstructing all view) (47).

This development greatly amazed, peeved and perplexed Sri Ram. (He thought to himself, wondering—) 'I have chopped off one hundred one heads (of Ravana) which are all equal in their radiance (48).

न चैव रावणः शान्तो दृश्यते जीवितक्षयात्। ततः सर्वास्त्रविद्धीरः कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः।।49।।
अस्त्रैश्च बहुभिर्युक्तश्चिन्तयामास राघवः। यैर्यैर्बाणैर्हता दैत्या महासत्त्वपराक्रमाः।।50।।
त एते निष्फलं याता रावणस्य निपातने। इति चिन्ताकुले रामे समीपस्थो विभीषणः।।51।।

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उवाच राघवं वाक्यं ब्रह्मदत्तवरो ह्यसौ। विच्छिन्ना बाहवोऽप्यस्य विच्छिन्नानि शिरांसि च।।52।।
उत्पत्स्यन्ति पुनः शीघ्रमित्याह भगवानजः। नाभिदेशेऽमृतं तस्य कुण्डलाकारसंस्थितम्।।53।।

na caiva rāvaṇaḥ śānto dṛśyate jīvitakṣayāt /
tataḥ sarvāstraviddhiraḥ kausalyānandavardhanaḥ //
astraiśca bahubhiryuktaścintayāmāsa rāghavaḥ /
yairyairbāṇairhatā daityā mahāsattvaparākramāḥ //
ta ete niṣphalaṃ yātā rāvaṇasya nipātane /
iti cintākule rāme samīpastho vibhīṣaṇaḥ //
uvāca rāghavaṃ vākyaṃ brahmadattavaro hyasau /
vicchinnā bāhavo'pyasya vicchinnani śirāṃsi ca //
utpatsyanti punaḥ śīghramityāha bhagavānajaḥ /
nābhideśe'mṛtaṃ tasya kuṇḍalākārasaṃsthitam //

But still Ravana does not appear to calm down (i.e. become dysfunctional and mellowed, he does not seem to relent, he is not at all immobilised and does not die) due to loss of life (i.e. so much blood and so many heads)'. Then the son of Kaushalya (Sri Ram)—who was an expert in the art of using all types of weapons, was steadfast, courageous, strong and brave (49) and was armed (to the teeth, as it were) with all types (varieties) of arms and armaments—thought to himself, wondering, 'All those arrows which I had previously used to slay big, valorous, valiant, mighty and strong demons (50) have failed to kill this Ravana (i.e. they have become ineffective against him)'.

Seeing that Sri Ram was very worried, confounded and perturbed, Vibhishan—who was standing near him (51)—said, 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Lord Brahma (the creator) had granted him a boon. He had said at the time of giving the boon that all his heads and arms will grow back immediately afresh as soon as they are cut-off. Oh Lord! Amrit (elixir of life; ambrosia) is kept securely in a circular coiled patch in his navel region (52-53).

तच्छोषयानलास्त्रेण तस्य मृत्युस्ततो भवेत्। विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा रामः शीघ्रपराक्रमः।।54।।
पावकास्त्रेण संयोज्य नाभिं विव्याध रक्षसः। अनन्तरं च विच्छेद शिरांसि च महाबलः।।55।।
बाहूनपि च संरब्धो रावणस्य रघूत्तमः। ततो घोरां महाशक्तिमादाय दशकन्धरः।।56।।
विभीषणवधार्थाय चिक्षेप क्रोधविह्वलः। चिच्छेद राघवो बाणैस्तां शितैर्हेमभूषितैः।।57।।

tacchoṣayānalāstrena tasya mṛtyustato bhavet /
vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā rāmaḥ śīghraparākramaḥ //
pāvakāstreṇa saṃyojya nābhiṃ vivyādha rakṣasaḥ /
anantaraṃ ca ciccheda śirāṃsi ca mahābalaḥ //

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bāhūnapi ca saṃrabdho rāvaṇasya raghūttamaḥ /
tato ghorāṃ mahāśaktimādāya daśakandharaḥ //
vibhīṣaṇavadhārthāya cikṣepa krodhavihvalaḥ /
ciccheda rāghavo bāṇaistāṃ śitairhemabhūṣitaiḥ //

Dry it up with a fire-weapon. That is the only way to bring about his death[1']. Hearing these words of Vibhishan, the mighty and strong, valiant and valorous Sri Ram swiftly (54) mounted the fire weapon and shot it at the navel of the demon (Ravana). After that, the most valiant and valorous Sri Ram, who is the most exalted in the Raghu's clan, rapidly severed the demon's head and arms. At this, betrayed by Vibhishan, the 10-headed one (Ravana) aimed a very fierce weapon called 'Mahashkti' (55-56) at Vibhishan to kill him because he (Ravana) was extremely agitated, annoyed, exasperated, peeved and angry at Vibhishan (for his betrayal, regicide, fratricide and treason). But Raghav (Sri Ram) immediately intercepted it and cut it down with a gold-plated, sharp arrow (57).

[Note :—[1]It is not that the all-knowing Lord did not know that there is a patch of life sustaining Amrit in the navel of Ravana. According to Yoga philosophy, the navel is the location of the Manipur Chakra which is a subtle energy center in the body directly related with the sun, its colour is yellow like that of the sun, and it is like the furnace that keeps the fire of life burning in the body as it is the central point in the body where the digestive and other vital organs of the body are located.

Further, the coiled source of immortal life referred to by Vibhishan is called the Kundalini, which is the coiled structure present at the bottom of the spine and harbours immense source of energy that, when aroused by ascetics, gives them control over their vital functions and their life so much so that they can even control when to die. Vibhishan is referring to these two structures here—the Manipur Chakra as well as the Kundalini.

The Lord just wished to test the loyalty and integrity of Vibhishan and his commitment as his devotee. He wished to give credit to him for the final killing of Ravana; this is a mark of the grace and benevolence of the Lord that he gives credit to his devotees for all the great deeds done by him. But in the process Vibhishan got the ignominy of being his brother's killer, a charge that he never was able to wash off. Indeed, Vibishan has never been able to get rid of the epithet of a 'betrayer' and the ignominious charge of treason, regicide and fratricide ever since. In fact, his name has been synonymous with these sins—selfish betrayal, treason, fratricide and regicide notwithstanding the spiritual side of his actions. From this point of view, Kumbhakarn was more noble, loyal and an outstandingly honourable character vis-ë-vis Vibhishan, for the former was also a subtle

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devotee of the Lord and was also rebuked by Ravana, but he did not betray him in the thick of battle. This is the reason that Kumbhakarn found salvation for his soul.]

दशग्रीवशिरश्छेदात्तदा तेजो विनिर्गतम्। म्लानरूपो बभूवाथ छिन्नैः शीर्षैर्भयङ्करैः।। 58।।
एकेन मुख्यशिरसा बाहुभ्यां रावणो बभौ। रावणस्तु पुनः क्रुद्धो नानाशस्त्रास्त्रवृष्टिभिः।।59।।
ववर्ष रामं तं रामस्तथा बाणैर्ववर्ष च। ततो युद्धमभूद्घोरं तुमुलं लोमहर्षणम्।। 60।।

daśagrīvaśiracchedāttadā tejo vinirgatam/
mlānarūpo babhūvātha chinnaiḥ śīrṣairbhayaṅkaraiḥ//
ekena mukhyaśirasā bāhubhyāṃ rāvaṇau babhau/
rāvaṇastu punaḥ kruddho nānāśastrāstravṛṣṭibhiḥ//
vavarṣa rāmaṃ taṃ rāmastathā bāṇairvavarṣa ca/
tato yuddhamabhūdghoraṃ tumulaṃ lomaharṣaṇam//

The 'Tej' (the essential life giving energy; divine effulgence) of the 10-headed Ravana escaped from him due to the severance of his heads, and he looked deformed, gloomy and devoid of his earlier awe-inspiring, majestic but fearful form because of the severance of those formidable heads (58). Presently, Ravana had retained only one central head and two arms. But still he did not relent, but became extremely ferocious and vehemently angry, and continued to rain innumerable varieties of weapons and arms (59) upon Sri Ram. Similarly, Sri Ram heavily peppered, sprayed and showered him continuously with arrows. As a result, once again a thrilling, hair raising, very fierce and horrifying, last ditch, do-or-die battle erupted between them (60).

अथ संस्मारयामास मातली राघवं तदा। विसृजास्त्रं वधायास्य ब्राह्मं शीघ्रं रघूत्तम।। 61।।
विनाशकालः प्रथितो यः सुरैः सोऽद्य वर्तते। उत्तमाङ्गं न चैतस्य छेत्तव्यं राघव त्वया।।62।।
नैव शीर्ष्णि प्रभो वध्यो वध्य एव हि मर्मणि। ततः संस्मारितो रामस्तेन वाक्येन मातलेः।।63।।

atha saṃsmārayāmāsa mātalī rāghavaṃ tadā/
visṛjāstraṃ vadhāyāsya brāhmaṃ śīghraṃ raghūttama//
vināśakālaḥ prathito yaḥ suraiḥ so'dya vartate/
uttamāṅgaṃ na caitasya chettavyaṃ rāghava tvayā//
naiva śīrṣṇi prabho vadhyo vadhya eva hi marmaṇi/
tataḥ saṃsmārito rāmastena vākyena mātaleḥ//

At that point, Matli (the charioteer) reminded Raghav (Sri Ram), 'Oh the most exalted of the Raghus! To kill him, you must shoot the 'Brahmastra' (a weapon shot by invoking Lord Brahma) forthwith (61) because the time determined by the Gods for the destruction of the

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demon Ravana is present now. Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! You must not severe his head (62) because, oh Lord, he cannot be killed by cutting off of his heads, but his end can be brought about only by piercing his core or vital organ (i.e. his heart)'. These words of Matli reminded Sri Ram of the secret behind Ravana's invincibility as suggested to him by Vibhishan (63).

[Note—The Lord did not pay much attention to what Vibhishan had said in verse no.49-54, for had he done so then, Ravana would have been dead by now. What does this imply? Obviously the Lord had doubts about his integrity. and though he had acted on his advice and shot fierce arrows at Ravana on the suggestion, he was not too serious about it. This is because he wished to tell Vibhishan that he has not killed Ravana at his behest but on the final advice of Matli who was the God's charioteer. This was to ensure that in future Vibhishan did not boast of being the main factor in Ram's victory and to pre-empt any blackmail by the treacherous Vibhishan. The things have been handled so deftly that on the one hand Vibhishan had got the credit because of the benefit of doubt as to whose advice led to the final slaying of Ravana, and on the other hand the Lord ensured that Vibhishan could never claim the rewards because then the Lord would have said that it was Matli whose advice he had followed in killing Ravana, and not Vibhishan's.]

जग्राह स शरं दीप्तं निःश्वसन्तमिवोरगम्। यस्य पार्श्वे तु पवनः फले भास्करपावकौ।। 64।।
शरीरमाकाशमयं गौरवे मेरुमन्दरौ। पर्वस्वपि च विन्यस्ता लोकपाला महौजसः।। 65।।

jagrāha sa śaraṃ dīptaṃ niḥśvasaṃtamivoragam /
yasya pārśve tu pavanaḥ phale bhāskarapāvakau //
śarīramākāśamayaṃ gaurave merumandarau /
parvasvapi ca vinyastā lokapālā mahaujasaḥ //

He took out a most formidable, majestic and radiantly glowing arrow resembling a fiercely hissing serpent or dragon. That arrow had (i.e. was endowed and empowered with) the magnificent glory, potent, might, power and strength of 'wind' in its rear end, of the 'sun' and the 'fire' at its tip, and of the 'Lokpals' (the custodians of the various worlds) at its soldering points (joints). Its vastness could be compared to the 'sky', and it was as heavy as the 'Meru' and 'Mandrachal' mountains (64-65).

जाज्वल्यमानं वपुषा भातं भास्करवर्चसा। तमुग्रमस्त्रं लोकानां भयनाशनमद्भुतम्।। 66।।
अभिमन्त्र्य ततो रामस्तं महेषुं महाभुजः। वेदप्रोक्तेन विधिना सन्दधे कार्मुके बली।। 67।।

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jājvalyamānaṃ vapuṣā bhātaṃ bhāskaravarcasā /
tamugramastraṃ lokānāṃ bhayanāśanamadbhutam //
abhimantrya tato rāmastaṃ maheṣuṃ mahābhujaḥ /
vedaproktena vidhinā sandadhe kārmuke balī //

Since it was supernatural, most astounding, very divine and brilliant in shape and size, it resembled the sun in its splendour, brilliance, magnificence and dazzle. In order to vanquish and eliminate the fear and torments of all the worlds, this arrow—which was very violent, potent, sharp and effective as well as most strange, mysterious, wonderful, splendid and stupendous in prowess, powers, magnificence and majesty (66)—was invoked by Sri Ram who was very brave and had strong arms. He empowered it (the arrow) with Mantras invoked properly according to the prescribed method in the science of archery as described in the Vedas[1], and mounted and raised it on his strong bow (67).

[Note—[1]There are four sub Vedas called 'Up-Vedas'. They are—(1) Ayurveda, dealing with the science of herbal medicine; (2) Artha shastra, dealing with economics, political science and related matters; (3) Dhanur veda, dealing with archery and warfare; and (4) Gandharva veda, dealing with the art of theatre, music, magic, singing and dancing etc. The Veda referred to here is obviously Dhanur veda.]

तस्मिन्सन्धीयमाने तु राघवेण शरोत्तमे। सर्वभूतानि वित्रेसुश्चचाल च वसुन्धरा।।68।।
स रावणाय संक्रुद्धो भृशमानम्य कार्मुकम्। चिक्षेप परमायत्तस्तमस्त्रं मर्मघातिनम्।।69।।

tasminsandhīyamāne tu rāghaveṇa śarottame /
sarvabhūtāni vitresuścacāla ca vasundharā //
sa rāvaṇāya saṅkruddho bhṛśamānamya kārmukam /
cikṣepa paramāyattastamastraṃ marmaghātinam //

When Raghav (Sri Ram) raised that excellent arrow which was the best amongst all the arrows (in existence) and readied it to shoot, all the creatures became terrified while the earth shook and trembled (68). He became very angry, pulled the bow (i.e. its string) properly, and aiming carefully, he shot the arrow which was potent enough and capable of rupturing the vital organ or the secret core of Ravana (i.e. the place where the elixir of life or Amrit which was responsible for Ravana's invincibility and long life was kept, and which had been sustaining Ravana till now) (69).

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स वज्र इव दुर्द्धर्षो वज्रपाणिविसर्जितः। कृतान्त इव घोरास्यो न्यपतद्रावणोरसि।। 70।।
स निमग्नो महाघोरः शरीरान्तकरः परः। बिभेद हृदयं तूर्णं रावणस्य महात्मनः।। 71।।
रावणस्याहरत्प्राणान्विवेश धरणीतले। स शरो रावणं हत्वा रामतूणीरमाविशत्।। 72।।

sa vajra eva durdharṣo vajrapāṇivisarjitaḥ /
kṛtānta iva ghorāsyo nyapatadrāvaṇorasi //
sa nimagno mahāghoraḥ śarīrāntakaraḥ paraḥ /
bibheda hṛdayaṃ tūrṇaṃ rāvaṇasya mahātmanaḥ //
rāvaṇasyāharatprāṇānviveśa dharaṇitale /
sa śaro rāvaṇaṃ hatvā rāmatūṇīramāviśat //

That arrow—which was most formidable, fierce, mighty, severe and uncompromising like the Vajra (thunderbolt) throne by 'Vajrapani' (i.e. by Indra, the king of Gods, the one who holds the Vajra), which resembled the fierce and horrifying mouth of death, and which was intolerably ferocious—hit Ravana on his chest (70).

That most formidable, severe, uncompromising, unrelenting, powerful and fatal arrow—which was empowered with special quality to slay the body which it struck—entered the body and ruptured the heart of that great Ravana (71). It ended (terminated) the life of Ravana and bored (drilled) itself into the earth. In this way, having slayed Ravana, the arrow returned back to the quiver of Sri Ram (72).

[Note :—(i) The arrow literally drilled its way through Ravana's armour. Since Ravana knew that the most sensitive part of his body were his navel (verse nos. 53-54) and his heart (verse nos. 63, 71), he surely must have secured them to the best of his ability. This arrow penetrated through its thick armour, then bored through the thickness of his flesh and bones, emerged from the other side of his body and entered the earth. In modern parlance it could have been an armour penetrating missile. For that matter, all the special arrows or projectiles shot by both of them at each other—such as the Indrastra, the Brahmastra, the Agneyastra etc.—could have been state of the art, technologically advanced war heads.

(ii) Further, the use of the prefix 'Mahatma' i.e. the 'great soul' for Ravana in verse no. 71 shows that his killing should be viewed in the correct perspective. For far from being an ordinary pervert and vile sinner, he was indeed a great soul, realised personae who had acquired this outwardly evil mongering body due to his past misdeeds and misdemeanors, but he was nevertheless an enlightened and wise soul. There are umpteen number of verses highlighting this aspect of his character—such as for example Canto 10, verse nos. 55-61 of Lanka Kand itself. Even the Gods—who were always tormented by Ravana and were

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behind his death—had to concede that Ravana was indeed a great and privileged soul. See verse nos. 78-82 below.

(iii) The technology of recovering the arrows and other projectiles once shot for re-use was the prime reason why big battles were fought with only one or two quivers in stock. There was no need for fresh supply of arrows because all the arrows could be retrieved. The credit lied not in making use of this technologically advanced weapon on the enemy at reckless random, but using it meticulously, properly, with correct timing and aim, and properly charged or invoked by Mantras to make them most effective.

(iv) The arrow was charged with powers of electric, much like thunderbolt or lightening that strikes the earth from the clouds during severe thunderstorms. That is why it entered the earth, because any lightening strike ends by the bolt entering the earth to render it neutral.]

तस्य हस्तात्पपाताशु सशरं कार्मुकं महत्। गतासुर्भ्रमिवेगेन राक्षसेन्द्रोऽपतद्भुवि।। 73।।
तं दृष्ट्वा पतितं भूमौ हतशेषाश्च राक्षसाः। हतनाथा भयत्रस्ता दुद्रुवुः सर्वतोदिशम्।। 74।।

tasya hastātpapātāśu saśaraṃ kārmukaṃ mahat/
gatāsurbhramivegena rākṣasendro'patadbhuvi//
taṃ dṛṣṭvā patitaṃ bhūmau hataśeṣāśca rākṣasāḥ/
hatanāthā bhayatrastā dudruvuḥ sarvatodiśam//

As soon as the arrow slammed into him, Ravana's huge bow fell down from his hand along with his arrow. He swooned and tottered, and the great king of demons collapsed to the ground (73).

Seeing him lying on the ground, the remaining demons who had survived death till now became without a Lord (or commander), lost all hopes and fled away terrified, helter-skelter, everywhere from the battle field (74).

दशग्रीवस्य निधनं विजयं राघवस्य च। ततो विनेदुः संहृष्टा वानरा जितकाशिनः।। 75।।
वदन्तो रामविजयं रावणस्य च तद्वधम्। अथान्तरिक्षे व्यनदत्सौम्यस्त्रिदशदुन्दुभिः।। 76।।

daśagrīvasya nidhanaṃ vijayaṃ rāghavasya ca/
tato vineduḥ saṃhṛṣṭā vānarā jitakāśinaḥ//
vadanto rāmavijayaṃ rāvaṇasya ca tadvadham/
athāntarikṣe vyanadatsaumyastridaśadundubhiḥ//

'The 10-headed one has died, and Raghav (Lord Ram) has been victorious'—the monkeys, who were crowned with victory, were jubilant and ecstatic with joy at this glorious achievement, and they started applauding it loudly in chorus (75). They praised, lauded and

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applauded the victory of Sri Ram over the sinful Ravana. In the sky meanwhile, there was a welcome reverberating sound of the playing of the kettle drums and trumpets to celebrate the happy occasion (76).

पपात पुष्पवृष्टिश्च समन्ताद्राघवोपरि। तुष्टुवुर्मुनयः सिद्धाश्चारणाश्च दिवौकसः।। 77।।
अथान्तरिक्षे ननृतुः सर्वतोऽप्सरसो मुदा। रावणस्य च देहोत्थं ज्योतिरादित्यवत्स्फुरत्।। 78।।
प्रविवेश रघुश्रेष्ठं देवानां पश्यतां सताम्। देवा ऊचुरहो भाग्यं रावणस्य महात्मनः।। 79।।

papāta puṣpavṛṣṭiśca samantādrāghavopari /
tuṣṭuvurmunayaḥ siddhāścāraṇāśca divaukasaḥ //
athāntarikṣe nanṛtuḥ sarvato'psaraso mudā /
rāvaṇasya ca dehotthaṃ jyotirādityavatsphurat //
praviveśa raghuśreṣṭhaṃ devānāṃ paśyatāṃ satām /
devā ūcuraho bhāgyaṃ rāvaṇasya mahātmanaḥ //

Flowers were showered on Sri Ram from all the directions, while the sages, hermits, ascetics, mystics, Charans (minstrels and bards) and Gods began to sing his magnificent glory and laudatory prayers (77).

Then the Apsaras (celestials damsels) began dancing in jubilation in the sky (heavens) most joyfully and cheerfully. Just at that time, a shaft or ball of splendorous, dazzlingly bright effulgence of light, which was blinding, brilliant and as magnificent as the sun, emerged from the body of Ravana (78) and entered the body of the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) even as the Gods watched in awe and wonderment. Seeing this (wonderful and rarest of rare spectacle), the Gods exclaimed, 'Oh! The great soul Ravana is indeed very fortunate and privileged (79).

[Note—This bright light represented Ravana's soul which entered its primary source, the cosmic Soul, represented by the Lord who was a visible manifestation of the supreme transcendental Brahm. This episode visibly explains what is meant when the Vedas speak of a creature's soul or Atma merging with the supreme Soul of the creation. If we look at the whole story from this perspective, we can easily understand why Sri Ram is regarded as a visible form of Brahm. Ramayan tells us in a story form what the Vedas and the Upanishads have been telling in philosophical terms. In fact, this is the very purpose of the Lord's revelation—to establish in real and verifiable terms what the 'truth' is, but so abstract that it is beyond the comprehension of ordinary creatures.]

वयं तु सात्त्विका देवा विष्णोः कारुण्यभाजनाः। भयदुःखादिभिर्व्याप्ताः संसारे परिवर्तिनः।। 80।।

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अयं तु राक्षसः क्रूरो ब्रह्महातीव तामसः। परदाररतो विष्णुद्वेषी तापसहिंसकः।। 81।।
पश्यत्सु सर्वभूतेषु राममेव प्रविष्टवान्। एवं ब्रुवत्सु देवेषु नारदः प्राह सुस्मितः।। 82।।

vayaṃ tu sāttvikā devā viṣṇoḥ kāruṇyabhājanāḥ /
bhayaduḥkhādibhirvyāptāḥ saṃsāre parivartinaḥ //
ayaṃ tu rākṣasaḥ krūro brahmahātīva tāmasaḥ /
paradāraarato viṣṇudveṣī tāpasahiṃsakaḥ //
paśyatsu sarvabhūteṣu ramameva praviṣṭavān /
evaṃ bruvatsu deveṣu nāradaḥ prāha susmitaḥ //

We Gods primarily have good virtues and characteristics in abundance, and are the favourite (or preferred ones) of Lord Vishnu, but still we wander about in this world surrounded and tormented with fears, sorrows etc. (80). Compared to this, he (Ravana) was very cruel and merciless, a murderer and slayer of Brahmins, possessed the most lowly and detestable characteristics such as all sorts of evil, vices, perversions etc., was lascivious, promiscuous, insincere and unchaste, was opposed to the Lord, was a heretic, an infidel, had ill-will and animosity towards Vishnu, and was the tormentor of those who were doing penances and austerities (Tapa) (81). But look, while all the creatures watched in wonder and awe, he has merged into (i.e. has become one with) Sri Ram'. When they were wondering thus, Narad smiled enigmatically and said (82)—

शृणुतात्र सुरा यूयं धर्मतत्त्वविचक्षणाः। रावणो राघवद्वेषादनिशं हृदि भावयन्।। 83।।
भृत्यैः सह सदा रामचरितं द्वेषसंयुतः। श्रुत्वा रामात्स्वनिधनं भयात्सर्वत्र राघवम्।। 84।।
पश्यन्ननुदिनं स्वप्ने राममेवानुपश्यति। क्रोधोऽपि रावणस्याशु गुरुबोधाधिकोऽभवत्।। 85।।

śṛṇutātra surā yūyaṃ dharmatattvavicakṣaṇāḥ /
rāvaṇo rāghavadveṣādaniśaṃ hṛdi bhāvayan //
bhṛtyaiḥ saha sadā rāmacaritaṃ dveṣasaṃyutaḥ /
śrutvā rāmātsvanidhanaṃ bhayātsarvatra rāghavam //
paśyannanudinaṃ svapne rāmamevānupaśyati /
krodho'pi rāvaṇasyāśu gurubodhādhiko'bhavat //

'Oh dear Gods! Listen to my views. All of you are well versed in the essential wisdom of Dharma (i.e. the essentials of righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct, ethics, morality etc.). Since Ravana was opposed to Sri Ram, he constantly thought of him day and night, albeit with enmity and malice (83). His subordinates, servants and

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dependants also thought of him, though in inimical terms. Hearing that he was destined to die at the hands of Sri Ram, he was so mentally terrified of him that he constantly saw (i.e. imagined, visualised, thought of) Raghav (Sri Ram) everywhere and at all times (84) so much so that he even dreamt of him in the night when he slept. In this way, Ravana's anger and vengeance became his reward or boon, and was more fruitful and useful for him than the teachings and preaching of a true teacher called a Guru (85).

रामेण निहतश्चान्ते निर्धूताशेषकल्मषः। रामसायुज्यमेवाप रावणो मुक्तबन्धनः॥ 86॥

rāmeṇa nihataścānte nirdhūtāśeṣakalmaṣaḥ /
rāmasāyujyamevāpa rāvaṇo muktabandhanaḥ //

At the end, being killed at the hands of Sri Ram himself, all his remaining (residual) sins, vices, evils, misdeeds and misdemeanors and their resultant negative effects were washed away, purged, catheterized or cleansed. As a result, being freed or liberated from all the fetters (of this deluding, mundane, entangling, artificial world), Ravana attained the supreme stature of being one with Sri Ram (86).

पापिष्ठो वा दुरात्मा परधनपरदारेषु सक्तो यदि
स्यान्नित्यं स्नेहाद्भयाद्वा रघुकुलतिलकं भावयन्सम्परेतः।
भूत्वा शुद्धान्तरङ्गो भवशतजनितानेकदोषैर्विमुक्तः
सद्यो रामस्य विष्णोः सुरवरविनुतं याति वैकुण्ठमाद्यम्॥ 87॥

pāpiṣṭho vā durātmā paradhanaparadāreṣu sakto yadi
syānnityaṃ snehādbhayādvā raghukulatilakaṃ bhāvayansaṃparetaḥ /
bhūtvā śuddhāntaraṅgo bhavaśatajanitānekadoṣairvimuktaḥ
sadyo rāmasya viṣṇoḥ suravaravinutaṃ yāti vaikuṇṭhamādyam //

[Now in this verse, Narad prescribes the method for the creatures of this world to attain salvation—] Even though a person had been a past sinner, wicked, pervert and evil, had been wistful and rapacious towards the wealth and women of others—if he still, constantly, persistently and consistently, by devotion or out of fear (i.e. willingly out of devotion and faith, or fearfully out of fear of hell and retribution for his sins or misdemeanors), remembers, concentrates and meditates upon the most exalted and the best in the clan of Raghu (i.e. Sri Ram), and dies (literally, abandons his mortal body consisting of the five gross elements) while doing so, then he becomes purified in mind,

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intellect and heart (i.e. his internal being is cleansed and purified of all the vices and blemishes), is liberated/freed from the various sorrows, miseries, distresses, torments, troubles and tribulations that he has accumulated over hundreds of his births in this mundane world, and consequently the creature goes to the eternal abode of Sri Ram called Vaikunth (which is the divine heaven where Lord Vishnu resides). Sri Ram is an image (personification) of Lord Vishnu himself. This abode (Vaikunth) is praised and honoured even by Indra (i.e. this achievement of the soul of acquiring residence in Vaikunth is lauded and applauded by even the wisest of the Gods because of its rarity and superiority) (87).

[Note :—Verse no. 87 can be called a brief gospel of Narad for the benefit of the creatures who seek salvation through the path of remembrance of the Lord.]

हत्वा युद्धे दशास्यं त्रिभुवनविषमं वामहस्तेन चापं
भूमौ विष्टभ्य तिष्ठन्नितरकरधृतं भ्रामयन्बाणमेकम्।
आरक्तोपान्तनेत्रः शरदलितवपुः सूर्यकोटिप्रकाशो
वीरश्रीबन्धुराङ्गस्त्रिदशपतिनुतः पातु मां वीररामः।।88।।

hatvā yuddhe daśāsyaṃ tribhuvanaviṣamaṃ vāmahastena cāpaṃ
bhumau viṣṭabhya tiṣṭhannitarakaradhṛtaṃ bhrāmayanbāṇamekam /
āraktopāntanetraḥ śaradalitavapuḥ sūryakoṭiprakāśo
vīraśrībandhurāṅgastridaśapatinutaḥ pātu māṃ vīrarāmaḥ //

[Now, Narad describes the divine and heavenly view of Sri Ram after he has just obtained victory over Ravana—] Having killed the 10-headed Ravana—who was tormenting the three worlds—in the battle, he (Sri Ram) is standing with the bow in his left hand touching the ground (i.e. he is leaning against it), and is gently twirling and twisting (fiddling with) the arrow in his right hand. The corners of his eyes are red; his body—which has been peppered and sprayed by arrows—is radiant, glowing and splendorous like millions of suns; his robust and well built handsome body is crowned (adorned) by the glory of Victory; and he is lauded, praised, honoured and duly respected by Indra, the king of Gods. Oh the most valorous, valiant and majestic Lord Ram, protect me!' (88).

[Note :—Verse no. 88 is a prayer by Narad in honour of the victorious Sri Ram.]

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 12

Coronation of Vibhishan; Sita's fire-test of Purity

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

रामो विभीषणं दृष्ट्वा हनूमन्तं तथाङ्गदम्। लक्ष्मणं कपिराजं च जाम्बवन्तं तथा परान्।।1।।
परितुष्टेन मनसा सर्वानेवाब्रवीद्वचः। भवतां बाहुवीर्येन निहतो रावणो मया।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

rāmo vibhīṣaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā hanūmantaṃ tathāṅgadam /
lakṣmaṇaṃ kapirājaṃ ca jāmbavantaṃ tathā parān //
parituṣṭena manasā sarvānevābravīdvacaḥ /
bhavatāṃ bāhuvīryeṇa nihato rāvaṇo mayā //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Sri Ram looked (compassionately, gratefully and thankfully) at Hanuman, Angad, Sugriv, Jamvant and others (1). He was satisfied and happy. Then he said to them with a contented mind, to express his gratitude and give thanks, 'I have killed Ravana today by the strength of your arms!' (2).

कीर्तिः स्थास्यति वः पुण्या यावच्चन्द्रदिवाकरौ। कीर्तयिष्यन्ति भवतां कथां त्रैलोक्यपावनीम्।।3।।
मयोपेतां कलिहरां यास्यन्ति परमां गतिम्। एतस्मिन्नन्तरे दृष्ट्वा रावणं पतितं भुवि।।4।।
मन्दोदरीमुखाः सर्वाः स्त्रियो रावणपालिताः। पतिता रावणस्याग्रे शोचन्त्यः पर्यदेवयन्।।5।।

kīrtiḥ sthāsyati vaḥ puṇyā yāvaccandradivākaro /
kīrtayiṣyanti bhavatāṃ kathāṃ trailokyapāvanīm //
mayopetāṃ kaliharāṃ yāsyanti paramāṃ gatim /
etasminnantare dṛṣṭvā rāvaṇaṃ patitaṃ bhuvi //
mandodarīmukhāḥ sarvāḥ striyo rāvaṇapālitāḥ /
patitā rāvaṇasyāgre śocantyaḥ paryadevayan //

Your stupendous glories, the eternal fame of the magnificent and hitherto unknown astounding and astonishing deeds done by you, the honourable and laudatory achievements of yours will be sung and celebrated and shall remain established (in this world) as long as there is the sun and the moon. Those creatures who shall sing these glories and heavenly stories pertaining to my incarnation in which you and your deeds are intricately and inseparably woven, stories which have the divine and mystical potentials to purify all the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial, and the subterranean worlds) and are equally

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potent enough to vanquish all the evil effects, all the tainting blemishes and faults that afflict a creature in the present not-so holy era known as Kaliyug, shall attain the supreme state of emancipation and salvation, of finding the final rest in my holy feet which is the ultimate goal of the soul'.

About that time, as was expected, seeing Ravana lying on the ground (3-4), Mandodari and all other women who were protected by (i.e. looked after and sustained by) Ravana, came there, fell down before him (i.e. his dead body), and began mourning and lamenting in grief (5).

विभीषणः शुशोचार्तः शोकेन महतावृतः। पतितो रावणस्याग्रे बहुधा पर्यदेवयत्।। 6।।
रामस्तु लक्ष्मणं प्राह बोधयस्व विभीषणम्। करोतु भ्रातृसंस्कारं किं विलम्बेन मानद।।7।।
स्त्रियो मन्दोदरीमुख्याः पतिता विलपन्ति च। निवारयतु ताः सर्वा राक्षसी रावणप्रियाः।।8।।

vibhīṣaṇaḥ śuśocārtaḥ śokena mahatāvṛtaḥ /
patito rāvaṇasyāgre bahudhā paryadevayat //
rāmastu lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha bodhayasva vibhīṣaṇam /
karotu bhrātṛsaṃskāraṃ kiṃ vilambena mānada //
striyo mandodarīmukhyāḥ patitā vilapanti ca /
nivārayatu tāḥ sarvā rākṣasī rāvaṇapriyāḥ //

Even Vibhishan was overwhelmed with remorse, and was greatly grieved and distressed, feeling melancholic and worried[1]. He fell down before Ravana and lamented most woefully (6).

Then Sri Ram said to Laxman, 'Oh Maanad (literally, the vanquisher of pride, ego, vanity)! Console Vibhishan so that he does not waste much time now and performs the last rites of his brother. What is the benefit of unnecessarily delaying it now? The beloved demonesses of Ravana, the chief among them being Mandodari, are falling to the ground repeatedly and woefully lamenting and grieving inconsolably—so stop them from doing it' (8).

[Note—[1]What was Vibhishan now worried about? Well, for one he was worried about the ignominious and shameful face that he would have to show the citizens of Lanka now, especially the constant fear that would hound him now of being assassinated by some royal remnants of the earlier administration of Ravana; he was also worried as to what Sri Ram might do to him once the aim of killing his enemy Ravana has been achieved—could it be that Sri Ram would not trust a betrayer of his own brother and put him in prison and appoint someone else on the throne of

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Lanka, in which case Vibhishan would have precious little that he could do against the will of the conquering army commanders?

Then he did not know how to handle the ruined state of Lanka if even he was indeed made its king, for what he saw was smoldering remains of what was once a golden city which was rivaled by none in this world.

He did not know what answer he would give his sister-in-law Mandodari, especially if she asks him why he is grieving for Ravana when he was the cause of his final death, and the irony of the situation was such that if he did not formally grieve then that would be most unconventional and unpardonable deed which would be more horrendous than his betrayal of his brother, because he could always plead that he was insulted by Ravana which forced him to abandon him, but what answer would he give to the world if he did not grieve for his dead elder brother.

Shame and ignominy was playing heavy on the conscious of Vibhishan, making him worried about his reputation and future, and contrite and remorseful for the consequences of his deeds on his destiny.]

एवमुक्तोऽथ रामेण लक्ष्मणोऽगाद्विभीषणम्। उवाच मृतकोपान्ते पतितं मृतकोपमम्॥ 9॥
शोकेन महताविष्टं सौमित्रिरिदमब्रवीत्। यं शोचसि त्वं दुःखेन कोऽयं तव विभीषण॥ 10॥

evamukto'tha rāmeṇa lakṣmaṇo'gādvibhīṣaṇam /
uvāca mṛtakopānte patitaṃ mṛtakopamam //
śokena mahatāviṣṭaṃ saumitriridamabravīt /
yaṃ śocasi tvaṃ duḥkhena ko'yaṃ tava vibhīṣaṇa //

When Sri Ram had instructed Laxman in this way, the latter came near Vibhishan who was lying motionless as if dead near the corpse of his brother (9). Vibhishan was overcome with immense grief, contrition and remorse. The son of Sumita (Laxman) said, 'Oh Vibhishan! One for whom you are grieving and lamenting—who is he to you? (10).

त्वं वास्य कतमः सृष्टेः पुरेदानीमतः परम्। यद्वत्तोयौघपतिताः सिकता यान्ति तद्वशाः॥ 11॥
संयुज्यन्ते वियुज्यन्ते तथा कालने देहिनः। यथा धानासु वै धाना भवन्ति न भवन्ति च॥ 12॥
एवं भूतेषु भूतानि प्रेरितानीशमायया। त्वं चेमे वयमन्ये च तुल्याः कालवशोद्भवाः॥ 13॥

tvaṃ vāsya katamaḥ sṛṣṭeḥ puredānīmataḥ param /
yadvattoyaughapatitāḥ sikatā yānti tadvaśāḥ //
saṃyujyante viyujyante tathā kālena dehinaḥ /
yathā dhānāsu vai dhānā bhavanti na bhavanti ca //
evaṃ bhūteṣu bhūtāni preritānīśamāyayā /
tvaṃ ceme vayamanye ca tulyāḥ kālavaśodbhavāḥ //

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Further, what were you to him (i.e. how are you related to him) before this birth or are during this birth, or shall be in future births? Just like a particle of sand comes and goes (on the beach) under the influence of the flow of water (waves of the sea or ocean) (11), the creature, who has got a body, too is subjected to union and separation under the influence of Kaal (i.e. time, death, birth and circumstances etc.). Even as seeds are produced from other seeds, or they may decay and die without producing new ones (12), all the creatures are produced from other creatures and keep on dying and taking birth at the wish of, or on the behest of, the Maya (the deluding powers or creative as well as destructive wishful force) of the Lord[1]. All of us—you, we, they and all others—have been born under the effect, control, influence and on the behest of Kaal; we are all subservient to it, we obey it and dance to its tunes (13).

[Note—[1]Maya is the deluding powers of the supreme Lord which keeps the creature ignorant of the actual reality. The creature, under its influence, forgets that its true identity is the Atma and not the body. So, erroneously thinking that the body is the real self and the world in which the body lives is the real thing, the creature gets involved in numerous relations and their incumbent ties and entanglements, besides getting engrossed in doing deeds which the body does by the virtue of it having to do them as a matter of routine and as a matter of necessity of living in the world characterized by deeds and actions. But actually the Atma should not be involved in either of these two—deeds done by the body and the numerous relations that the body establishes in the course of its habitation in the gross and perishable world. The result is that the creature, i.e. the Atma, gets sucked in the vortex of misconceptions and illusions, leading to the Atma establishing false relations such as a husband, a son, a brother etc. Then the involvement in deeds produces its own consequences, and the Atma has to bear the fruits of its own ignorance and foolishness of allowing its self to getting involved in deeds. Even as all actions have their reactions, the deeds done by the Atma also produces their own set of results, and the Atma has to suffer from them. This situation is like getting submerged in a marshy bog from which it is difficult to emerge. Consequentially, the creature's Atma plunges in the endless cycle of birth and death due to the deluding effects of Maya.

But those who are wise and enlightened realise the truth, and they stop this rot by not allowing their Atma to get involved in the deeds done by their body and also keeping it aloof and detached from all worldly ties and relationships. Thus the chain is snapped once and for all, and what is known as Mukti or liberation and freedom is achieved, resulting in

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deliverance of the soul or Atma from this entrapping, perishable, artificial and tormenting world.]

जन्ममृत्यू यदा यस्मात्तदा तस्माद्भविष्यतः। ईश्वरः सर्वभूतानि भूतैः सृजति हन्त्यजः।। 14।।
आत्मसृष्टैरस्वतन्त्रैर्निरपेक्षोऽपि बालवत्। देहेन देहिनो जीवा देहाद्देहोऽभिजायते।।15।।
बीजादेव यथा बीजं देहान्य इव शाश्वतः। देहिदेहविभागोऽयमविवेककृतः पुरा।।16।।

janmamṛtyu yadā yasmāttadā tasmādbhaviṣyataḥ /
īśvaraḥ sarvabhūtāni bhutaiḥ sṛjati hantyajaḥ //
ātmasṛṣṭairasvatantrairnirapekṣo'pi bālavat /
dehena dehino jīvā dehāddeho'bhijāyate //
bījādeva yathā bījaṃ dehānya eva śāśvataḥ /
dehidehavibhāgo'yamavivekakṛtaḥ purā //

Birth and death are pre-destined, i.e. anybody who is destined to be instrumental in their happening shall be the cause of either of the two actually happening. [That is, a person who is destined to die at the hands of a particular person shall die at his hands, and no one can tinker with it. Similarly, a person who is supposed to give birth to a creature as its mother or father shall become its parent, and no one else.]

'Ishwar' (the supreme Lord God), who is without a birth (as he is eternal and has no beginning), creates and destroys all the mortal creatures with a gross body in this world, who have all been created by him using the fundamental elements called Bhuts, almost playfully like a child involves himself in playful activities just for the fun of it.

These creatures with a body create other creatures like themselves because of them being empowered by the Lord to do so. For this purpose, they employ their gross bodies which come together to produce one in their own likeness, thereby becoming the father and mother of the newly 'created' entity. Since all creatures have been produced by the union of two bodies reproducing in their own likeness, they are also called 'one with a body' as opposed to the supreme transcendental Lord who has no body of any kind. Further, since the body is gross and perishable because it is primarily made by the supreme Lord using the Bhuts which are the gross elements of Nature, the body, as a result, is also perishable. [These Bhuts are earth, water, fire, air and sky elements.]

The situation is similar to a seemingly lifeless seed, which has no

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visible signs of life in it, producing another seed in its likeness (which produces a gigantic tree, representing this world).

The 'wondrous and mysterious spark' that is responsible for injecting life is what is a lifeless piece of seed and a lifeless block of earth and other elements, i.e. the body of a creature, is what is known as the 'Atma' or soul. This Atma is eternal, truthful, primeval and universal. It is obviously a separate and superior entity than the gross body of the creature which the Atma lends life to. This Atma is the truthful identity of the creature. But on close examination we observe that when we talk of the 'living creature', we refer to the combined entity consisting of the body and the Atma. It is absurd to talk of the 'living creature' as consisting of only the Atma, although the Atma is the only conscious factor in the otherwise inane gross and dead body, or only of the body because the body is worthless without life in it. In fact, the Atma reveals its stupendous potentials only through the medium of the body, and it needs the body as a dwelling in the world. So both of them—the Atma and the body—are essentially the two sides of the same coin known as a 'living creature capable of reproducing in its kindness'. Therefore, to begin with, it is erroneous to differentiate between the body and the one who has that body. This notion of duality is due to ignorance of the reality (14-16).

नानात्वं जन्म नाशश्च क्षयो वृद्धिः क्रिया फलम्। दृष्टुराभान्त्यतद्धर्मा यथाग्नेर्दारुविक्रियाः ।। 17 ।।

nānātvaṃ janma nāśaśca kṣayo vṛddhiḥ kriyā phalam /
draṣṭurābhāntyataddharmā yathāgnerdāruvikriyāḥ //

Even as the various faults and inherent shortcomings of wood (represented by its various impurities—e.g. presence of moisture and other ingredients such as different chemicals, the basic nature of the wood such as whether it is dry or wet, whether it is healthy or eaten by ants etc.) are reflected in the fire when the former is put in it[1], the immaculate Atma, which is only a neutral witness to everything and not involved in any of them, appears to have differences and variations of forms and nature (depending upon the form or nature of the creature), appears to take birth, die, decay and perish (along with the body of the creature that harbours it), appears to develop and increase (in consonance with the development and enhancement of the body), appears to be doing deeds and suffering or enjoying from the results of those deeds (which are actually done by the body and not the Atma). All these things are not the Atma's basic and inherent character and nature (17).

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[Note—[1]When any piece of wood is put in fire to burn, it lends its special characters to the fire—e.g. if the wood is wet, it produces smoke; the colour of the flame of the fire is also dependent on the chemicals present in the wood as is evident in the scintillating array of dazzling colours produced when fire crackers are ignited, or when different types of firewood produce myriad shades and hues of colours of the flame when they are burnt. The fundamental nature, form and characteristics of 'fire and its flame' undergo sweeping changes under the influence of what is being put into it.

Similarly, though the Atma is pure and unchangeable, it undergoes transformation depending upon the level of wisdom, erudition and enlightenment of the creature, because it is the input of knowledge that helps the mind and the intellect to decide about anything. It is like seeing the sunlight through the glass prism when the white light of the sun seems to break up into seven colours. Each of these colours is an integral part of the light as a whole, but to say that sunlight is yellow or orange because one sees the light through the prism is a fallacious proposition.]

त इमे देहसंयोगादात्मना भान्त्यसद्ग्रहात्। यथा यथा तथा चान्यद्ध्यायतोऽसत्सदाग्रहात्।। 18।।

ta ime dehasaṃyogādātmanā bhāntyasadgrahāt /
yathā yathā tathā cānyaddhyāyato'satsadāgrahāt //

All these activities (e.g., birth, death, decay, prosperity, development, doing various deeds and either suffering or enjoying their consequences) appear to be true and for real only because of the false belief, the illusionary conception or deceptive notion that the body and the Atma or soul are united and inseparable, that they represent a combination in which they mix or gel harmoniously and inseparably, that there is coherence and similarity between them, that they are dancing in coordinated steps.

On the other hand when one realises that these are erroneous conceptions and false premises, then one begins to focus on the pure and uncorrupt nature of the Atma which is its truthful and real form. This leads to the realisation that what appeared to be true until now (as described above) is not at all true (18).

[Note—The Atma is an independent entity residing in the body as its 'master' who also happens to be its 'tenant'. 'Master' because the Atma is pure conscious supreme transcendental Brahm personified, and the latter is the undisputed Lord of creation represented by the creature, and it is the Atma which makes the body alive and active. It is the 'Tenant' because it will leave the body one day when the creature dies, and then the Atma

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would not have anything to do with the body it has just left like a tenant leaving a house and moving out. A tenant does not belong to the house he stays in and neither does the house belong to the former.]

प्रसुप्तस्यानहम्भावात्तदा भाति न संसृतिः। जीवतोऽपि तथा तद्वद्विमुक्तस्यानहङ्कृतेः ।। 19 ।।

prasuptasyānahambhāvāttadā bhāti na saṃsṛti/
jīvato'pi tathā tadvadvimuktasyānahaṅkṛteḥ//

Just like a person who is in deep sleep state of consciousness does not experience the presence of the external world of myriad deceptions and attractions because he is not involved in it, a person who has no Ahankar (has no ego, pride, vanity, arrogance and haughtiness) also does not perceive this world of artificiality and superficiality, which is otherwise so enticing and captivating, inspite of living in it and going about his routine affairs (19).

[Note—Ahankar is generally associated with the body when the creature thinks that he has so many achievements to his credit and that he has achieved them with his body. He erroneously begins to have a notion of possessiveness and belonging to this world; he starts to conjure up imaginary relations that have their relevance only as long as there is the body, for once a man dies these relations snap even without notice, and even in the case the ignorant Atma wished to retain them it cannot because the same son and wife whom he loved so much are eager to get rid of the dead body which is causing pollution in the household! So, when a man snuffs out Ahankar from his mental radar, he becomes as indifferent and dispassionate as a sleeping man who is unconcerned with the external world.

For example, if the house is on fire, a sleeping man wouldn't be bothered at all as long as he is asleep because he is totally disassociated with the house. He does not bother because he is not attached with his 'possession'; a sleeping man just cannot think that the house that he had built on his own strength and effort is getting destroyed. But once he gains consciousness, he is struck with grief and dismay. Similarly, when a wise man realises that the world is not related to him, and his true identity is his Atma and not the body, then he isn't bothered either with the body or the world with which the body is related and the various relations that exist only because of the existence of the body. The Atma has no relationships whatsoever. Absence of Ahankar eliminates all these at one go.

For all practical purposes, a wise man is as good as asleep as far as the external world is concerned. Even as a sleeping person forgets all about the outside world because his sense of belonging to and identification with the world, of calling the world mine and your, of having love or

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hatred, of having attachment or detachment, of having animosity/enmity or endearment and friendship, of having happiness or grief—all such emotions are literally 'asleep' with him. Similarly, a person who does not have Ahankar is freed from such emotions that are directly related with his sense of involvement with the world through the medium of the body, though he appears to be awake and active in this world.

The Atma or soul is pure and these things have got nothing to do with it. But because there is the false belief that the creature is the gross body and not the pure consciousness and pure self which is called the soul or Atma, all the external actions done by the body appears to have been done by the creature which, in fact, is an erroneous conclusion.]

तस्मान्मायामनोधर्मं जह्यहम्ममताभ्रमम्। रामभद्रे भगवति मनो धेह्यात्मनीश्वरे।। 20।।
सर्वभूतात्मनि परे मायामानुषरूपिणि। बाह्येन्द्रियार्थसम्बन्धात्त्याजयित्वा मनः शनैः।। 21।।

tasmānmāyāmanodharmaṃ jahyahammamatābhramam /
rāmabhadre bhagavati mano dhehyātmanīśvare //
sarvabhūtātmani pare māyāmānuṣarūpiṇi /
bāhyendriyārthasambandhāttyājayitvā manaḥ śanaiḥ //

So you must forsake all Maya induced influences from your Mana, i.e. you must forsake and banish all delusory, fallacious, erroneous and misleading thoughts, conceptions, notions, emotions, tendencies, dispositions and inclinations of your distracted, mislead and wayward mind, heart and intellect that have a deluding effect upon you and your behaviour. You must abandon the notion of having attachments, belongings, endearments and affectionate relationships. You must forsake ego and false pride leading to arrogance and haughtiness. You must detach your mind and heart from the attachments and ties that they have established with the external world and its objects of perceptions and actions that are related to the different sense organs of the body.

Having done this, you should endeavour to gradually focus and firmly establish your attention on your Atma and upon Lord Ram who is an image of that Atma, who is the supreme Lord who resides in the bosom of all the creatures as their Atma, and who has assumed an illusionary human form which is present here with us as Sri Ram accompanied by his inseparable Maya known as Bhagwati or Sita (20-21).

तत्र दोषान्दर्शयित्वा रामानन्दे नियोजय। देहबुद्ध्या भवेद्भ्राता पिता माता सुहृत्प्रियः।। 22।।

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विलक्षणं यदा देहाज्जानात्यात्मानमात्मना। तदा कः कस्य वा बन्धुर्भ्राता माता पिता सुहृत्।। 23।।

tatra doṣāndarśayitvā rāmānande niyojaya/
dehabuddhyā bhavedbhrātā pitā mātā suhṛtpriyaḥ//
vilakṣaṇaṃ yadā dehājjānātyātmānamātmanā/
tadā kaḥ kasya vā bandhurbhrātā mātā pitā suhṛt//

Show the mind-intellect complex the various faults, defects, shortcomings, taints and blemishes that are associated with the outside world consisting of sensual objects (which cause so much pain and agony to the creature), and instead appoint it (i.e. divert it and fix it, assign it) to the form of Sri Ram that provides bliss, peace, serenity and tranquility. All these relationships—mother, father, brother, kith and kin, well-wishers and compatriots etc.—exist because of the body (for the soul has no relations) (22).

In the instant a creature becomes enlightened and wisened to the fact that its Atma or soul is a different entity than the body (i.e. these two are separate, distinct things altogether)—and this acknowledgement or enlightenment or realisation must come from within the inner self, with pure conscious and sincere wisdom, with firm faith and conviction—it then realises that no one is its mother, father, brother, friend, relative, kin or well-wisher (23).

मिथ्याज्ञानवशाज्जाता दारागारादयः सदा। शब्दादयश्च विषया विविधाश्चैव सम्पदः।। 24।।
बलं कोशो भृत्यवर्गो राज्यं भूमिः सुतादयः। अज्ञानजत्वात्सर्वे ते क्षणसङ्गमभङ्गुराः।। 25।।

mithyājñānavaśājjātā dārāgārādayaḥ sadā/
śabdādayaśca viṣayā vividhāścaiva sampadaḥ//
balaṃ kośo bhṛtyavargo rājyaṃ bhūmiḥ sutādayaḥ/
ajñānajatvātsarve te kṣaṇasaṅgamabhaṅgurāḥ//

Having their origin in false, erroneous or misleading knowledge, or being based on illusionary, imaginary and deceptive conceptions, the wife and household, those things that are the subject matter of words (those things that are talked about, things that are learned and which makes a man well spoken and a good orator, those things that are defined by words etc.), innumerable worldly assets, wealth and prosperity (24), strength, courage and valour, treasury and riches, retinue of servants and attendants, kingdom and vast realm, land and property, sons and daughters etc.—all of these entities are tentative and impermanent (like a bubble of water) because of their temporary,

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transitory and unstable nature, and imaginary origin. No relationships are permanent and steadfast (25).

अथोत्तिष्ठ हृदा रामं भावयन् भक्तिभावितम्। अनुवर्तस्व राज्यादि भुञ्जन्प्रारब्धमन्वहम्।। 26।।
भूतं भविष्यदभजन्वर्तमानमथाचरन्। विहरस्व यथान्यायं भवदोषैर्न लिप्यसे।।27।।

athottiṣṭha hṛdā rāmaṃ bhāvayan bhaktibhāvitam /
anuvartasva rājyādi bhuñjanprārabdhamanvaham //
bhūtaṃ bhaviṣyadabhajanvartamānamathācaran /
viharasva yathānyāyaṃ bhavadoṣairna lipyase //

Hence, stop grieving and stand up. Constantly remembering Sri Ram who is attainable only by sincere devotion, purity of emotions and undiluted affections, you must get yourself involved in the care of your kingdom and other worldly affairs diligently, as determined for you by your destiny and past deeds done by you (26).

Not worrying about the past or the future, you must focus or concentrate your attention on the present and behave according to the laws and principles of probity, propriety, ethics, morality and righteousness. By doing so, you shall not get involved, attached or affected by various faults and blemishes associated with this mundane, delusory, tainting, artificial and entrapping world (27).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 26-27 is a great guide for our daily day to day activity. If we follow it, there will be no cause of anxiety of any kind, nor remorse and worries. We shall be at peace with ourselves, and shall not be attached with any of our deeds and actions and their results or rewards.

(ii) Verse nos. 10-27 can be called Laxman's gospel for Vibhishan.]

आज्ञापयति रामस्त्वां यद्भ्रातुः साम्परायिकम्। तत्कुरुष्व यथाशास्त्रं रुदतीश्चापि योषितः।। 28।।
निवारय महाबुद्धे लङ्कां गच्छन्तु मा चिरम्। श्रुत्वा यथावद्वचनं लक्ष्मणस्य विभीषणः।।29।।
त्यक्त्वा शोकं च मोहं च रामपार्श्वमुपागमत्। विमृश्य बुद्ध्या धर्मज्ञो धर्मार्थसहितं वचः।।30।।

ājñāpayati rāmastvāṃ yadbhrātuḥ sāmparāyikam /
tatkuruṣva yathāśāstraṃ rudatīścāpi yoṣitaḥ //
nivāraya mahābuddhe laṅkāṃ gacchantu mā ciram /
śrutvā yathāvadvacanaṃ lakṣmaṇasya vibhīṣaṇaḥ //
tyaktvā śokaṃ ca mohaṃ ca rāmapārśvamupāgamat /
vimṛśya buddhyā dharmajño dharmārthasahitaṃ vacaḥ //

Sri Ram orders you to perform the funeral rites of your brother as prescribed by the scriptures and remove all these grieving and weeping

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women from here (28). Oh the wise and intelligent one (Vibhishan)! Let them go back to Lanka (from this battle field). Do not delay in it'.

Hearing these truthful words of wisdom from Laxman (29), Vibhishan stopped feeling remorseful and unnecessarily grieving as well as having the deluding and erroneous sense of attachments, endearments and regrets (that he has been instrumental in the death of his brother and the fact that he has lost all his relatives in the battle). He came to where Sri Ram was. He was wise and an expert in the tenets of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and laws of conduct). So he spoke words after giving due thought to them (i.e. after considering the pros and cons of what he was saying) (30).

रामस्यैवानुवृत्त्यर्थमुत्तरं पर्यभाषत। नृशंसमनृतं क्रूरं त्यक्तधर्मव्रतं प्रभो।।31।।
नार्होऽस्मि देव संस्कर्तुं परदाराभिमर्शिनम्। श्रुत्वा तद्वचनं प्रीतो रामो वचनमब्रवीत्।।32।।
मरणान्तानि वैराणि निवृत्तं नः प्रयोजनम्। क्रियतामस्य संस्कारो ममाप्येष यथा तव।।33।।

rāmasyaivānuvṛttyarthamuttaraṃ paryabhāṣata /
nṛśaṃsamanṛtaṃ krūraṃ tyaktadharmavrataṃ prabho //
nārho'smi deva saṃskartuṃ paradārābhimarśinam /
śrutvā tadvacanaṃ prīto rāmo vacanamabravīt //
maraṇāntāni vairāṇi nivṛtaṃ naḥ prayojanam /
kriyatāmasya saṃskāro mamāpyeṣa yathā tava //

Vibhishan was very clever and prudent, so he said the following words which would be most acceptable and pleasant to hear for Sri Ram—'Oh Lord! This fellow Ravana was most wicked, evil and pervert minded, tyrannical, cruel and merciless, a liar and imposter, and was devoid of all that is considered righteous, proper and ethical (31). Oh Lord! I am not willing to do the last rites of this promiscuous adulterer'. Hearing his words, Sri Ram felt pleased (i.e. he had expected Vibhishan to say something of the sort). Sri Ram said (32), 'Animosity, ill-will, malice, hatred, enmity etc. exist only up till the time of death. Our objective has been achieved, i.e. we have finished our job of killing him. Since he is dead, there is therefore no further cause of harbouring animosity and ill-will. Now, he belongs to you as much as he belongs to me. Hence, you must do his last rites (33).

[Note :—(i) Verse no. 30 tells us that Vibhishan pondered over what to tell Sri Ram. Just a few moments ago, he was weeping and grieving on the death of his brother (verse no. 6), and suddenly he changed track to criticise him (verse no. 31). He realised that the odds were heavily stacked

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against him if he dared to show any sympathy for Ravana at the present time, and he must not say anything to Sri Ram that would alarm him or annoy him, for there was still a chance that having got rid of Ravana, Sri Ram might think of eliminating this betrayer also just to avoid any chance of back-stabbing or revolt at the last minute, and to pre-empt the demons pursuing Sri Ram once he turns his back on Lanka and heads for Ayodhya. Having seen Sri Ram's prowess and potent in the battle field, he feared for his life. This turn-coat attitude of Vibhishan is very apparent and glaring here.

(ii) He got the cue from Laxman himself in verse nos. 26-29. He had to decide quickly. Being a practical, prudent, clever and sagacious man, he decided, and correctly so, that the best course of action for him and the remainder of the demons under the present dispensation was not to displease Sri Ram in any way. That his criticism of Ravana pleased Sri Ram (verse no. 32) is evidence enough of his correct interpretation of the course of events, and his coming to the decision to change tack and say things which are pleasing to Sri Ram (i.e. criticising Ravana).

(iii) But Sri Ram's reply is very interesting in this context. By saying that 'he (Ravana) is as much yours as he is mine', Sri Ram has emphasised the fact that the soul/Atma of all the creatures are pure and faultless. It is the gross body which indulges in all worldly deeds and gets tainted in the process, and it is now dead, lifeless and useless. The entity called 'Ravana' is different from the body lying in the battle field. Sri Ram, in effect, tells Vibhishan what Laxman had said in verse nos. 10-25 a little while earlier. But this fool Vibhishan could not or did not grasp the subtle message—because had he realised the essential truth, he would not have cursed Ravana as he did now and criticise an already dead person, nor would he have refused to perform his last rites, specially when Laxman had ordered him to do so (verse no. 28).]

रामाज्ञां शिरसा धृत्वा शीघ्रमेव विभीषणः। सान्त्ववाक्यैर्महाबुद्धिं राज्ञीं मन्दोदरीं तदा।। 34।।
सान्त्वयामास धर्मात्मा धर्मबुद्धिर्विभीषणः। त्वरयामास धर्मज्ञः संस्कारार्थं स्वबान्धवान्।।35।।

rāmājñāṃ śirasā dhṛtvā śīghrameva vibhīṣaṇaḥ/
sāntvavākyairmahābuddhiṃ rājñīṃ mandodarīṃ tadā//
sāntvayāmāsa dharmātmā dharmabuddhirvibhīṣaṇaḥ/
tvarayāmāsa dharmajñaḥ saṃskārārthaṃ svabāndhavān//

Then Vibhishan respectfully carried out the orders (instructions) of Sri Ram swiftly. He consoled the wise Mandodari, the queen, with a calm and soothing voice. After that (34), Vibhishan—who was of a righteous mind, was a noble soul, and was an expert in righteousness,

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probity and propriety—advised his relatives, compatriots and others to arrange for the funeral of Ravana as soon as possible (35).

चित्यां निवेश्य विधिवत्पितृमेधविधानतः। आहिताग्नेर्यथा कार्यं रावणस्य विभीषणः।। 36।।
तथैव सर्वमकरोद्बन्धुभिः सह मन्त्रिभिः। ददौ च पावकं तस्य विधियुक्तं विभीषणः।। 37।।

cityāṃ niveśya vidhivatpitṛmedhavidhānataḥ /
āhitāgneryathā kāryaṃ rāvaṇasya vibhīṣaṇaḥ //
tathaiva sarvamakarodbandhubhiḥ saha mantribhiḥ /
dadau ca pāvakaṃ tasya vidhiyuktaṃ vibhīṣaṇaḥ //

Vibhishan laid the corpse (of Ravana) on the funeral pyre observing all the traditional regulations and rules prescribed for the cremation ritual of a father. Then he duly consigned the body of Ravana to the flames by lighting the funeral pile in the prescribed manner (36) accompanied by his compatriots and ministers. He also completed 'offering of the fire' ritual in duly traditional and sanctified manner (37).

[Note :—(i) The 'offering of the fire' ritual is part of the last rite when the eldest son or nearest male relative of the deceased punctures the skull with a wooden spike and puts a globule of fire or burning piece of wood in the mouth of the deceased. This is called 'Agnidaan'. (ii) Verse no. 36 shows that, after all, he treated Ravana as his father. (iii) Another point worth noting here is that no mention is made of whatever happened to the dead bodies of Kumbhakarn, Meghnad etc. It appears that their funeral rites were done quickly by Ravana himself as is usually done in war times. Quickly because there was no time for elaborate rituals, and it was done along with the other casualties of the day in a mass funeral.]

स्नात्वा चैवार्द्रवस्त्रेण तिलान्दर्भाभिमिश्रितान्। उदकेन च सम्मिश्रान्प्रदाय विधिपूर्वकम्।। 38।।
प्रदाय चोदकं तस्मै मूर्ध्ना चैनं प्रणम्य च। ताः स्त्रियोऽनुनयामास सान्त्वमुक्त्वा पुनः पुनः।। 39।।

snātvā caivārdravastreṇa tilāndarbhābhimiśritān /
udakena ca sammiśrānpradāya vidhipūrvakam //
pradāya codakaṃ tasmai murdhnā cainaṃ praṇamya ca /
tāḥ striyo'nunayāmāsa sāntvamuktvā punaḥ punaḥ //

Then he bathed, and with wet clothes still on his body, he offered a palm-full of water having Sesame seeds and soft grass blades floating in it to the departed soul as per established tradition for performing

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funeral rites (38). After offering oblations in this way, he put his head to the ground as a token of respect and reverence to the departed soul, and then repeatedly condoled those grieving women (of Ravana's household) using soothing words of consolation and condolence (39).

गम्यतामिति ताः सर्वा विविशुर्नगरं तदा। प्रविष्टासु च सर्वासु राक्षसीषु विभीषणः।। 40।।
रामपार्श्वमुपागत्य तदातिष्ठद्विनीतवत्। रामोऽपि सह सैन्येन ससुग्रीवः सलक्ष्मणः।। 41।।
हर्षं लेभे रिपून्हत्वा यथा वृत्रं शतक्रतुः। मातलिश्च तदा रामं परिक्रम्याभिवन्द्य च।। 42।।
अनुज्ञातश्च रामेण ययौ स्वर्गं विहायसा। ततो हृष्टमना रामो लक्ष्मणं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 43।।

gamyatāmiti tāḥ sarvā viviśurnagaraṃ tadā /
praviṣṭāsu ca sarvāsu rākṣasīṣu vibhīṣaṇaḥ //
rāmapārśvamupāgatya tadātiṣṭhadvinītavat /
rāmo'pi saha sainyena sasugrīvaḥ salakṣmaṇaḥ //
harṣaṃ lebhe ripūnhatvā yathā vṛtraṃ śatakratuḥ /
mātaliśca tadā rāmaṃ parikramyāabhivandya ca //
anujñātaśca rāmeṇa yayau svargaṃ vihāyasā /
tato hṛṣṭamanā rāmo lakṣmaṇaṃ cedamabravīt //

He instructed those women—'You should all go back now'. Then all of them went back to the city. When all the demonesses (of Ravana's household and sundry others whose husbands had been killed in the battle field) had gone back to the city, Vibhishan (40) came near Sri Ram and stood before him most politely and humbly. Sri Ram along with his army, Sugriv and Laxman (41) was very cheerful on having eliminated the enemy just like Indra felt after the slaying of the demon Vrittasur. Thence, Matli (the charioteer) circumambulated Sri Ram and bowed before him (42), and getting his permission to leave, he went back to the heavens. Then Sri Ram said to Laxman with a most cheerful and delighted heart (43)—

विभीषणाय मे लङ्काराज्यं दत्तं पुरैव हि। इदानीमपि गत्वा त्वं लङ्कामध्ये विभीषणम्।। 44।।
अभिषेचय विप्रैश्च मन्त्रवद्विधिपूर्वकम्। इत्युक्तो लक्ष्मणस्तूर्णं जगाम सह वानरैः।। 45।।
लङ्कां सुवर्णकलशैः समुद्रजलसंयुतैः। अभिषेकं शुभं चक्रे राक्षसेन्द्रस्य धीमतः।। 46।।

vibhīṣaṇāya me laṅkārājyaṃ dattaṃ puraiva hi /
idānīmapi gatvā tvaṃ laṅkāmadhye vibhīṣaṇam //
abhiṣecaya vipraiśca mantravadvidhipūrvakam /
ityukto lakṣmaṇastūrṇaṃ jagāma saha vānaraiḥ //

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laṅkāṃ suvarṇakalaśaiḥ samudrajalasaṃyutaiḥ /
abhiṣekaṃ śubhaṃ cakre rākṣasendrasya dhīmataḥ //

'I have already given the kingdom of Lanka to Vibhishan (see Lanka Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 43-45). Still, you must go to Lanka with him (44) and get him duly anointed in a proper, formal way by chanting of Mantras by Brahmins'. Getting these instructions from Sri Ram, Laxman, accompanied by other monkeys (45), went to Lanka and anointed the most wise and intelligent of the demon kings (Vibhishan) on the throne of Lanka at an auspicious moment using the water of the ocean contained in a golden pot for the anointment purpose (46).

[Note :—(i) Verse no. 45 indicates that there were Brahmins in the city of Lanka. But how come they were there amongst the anti-Brahmin demons? The two plausible answers are—(a) Multitudes of Brahmins were kept in Ravana's captivity, perhaps under shackles, and engaged by him anytime when he used to perform the various fire and other religious rituals in order to serve his self interest—whether it was the conquest of Gods, or as he had done prior to the final duel with Sri Ram, for the performance of different fire sacrifices. For any sacrifice, Brahmins were needed to recite the Vedic Mantras. (b) Since Ravana himself was a Brahmin by birth, being the son of Visrasrava who was a Brahmin and a sage, and was a grandson of sage Pulastya, he spared the people of his own race from death if they pleaded mercy and vowed to accept his servility and promised allegiance to him. Otherwise, there is no question of getting Brahmins to chant the Mantras so quickly in Lanka which was 800 miles in the ocean from the mainland of India.

(ii) Verse no. 46 indicates that at that time, there were no rivers in the island of Lanka—it was surrounded by the ocean in all the directions, was south of the equator, and had no glaciers etc. to support the network of rivers. Perhaps this is the reason why Sita did not drink (or could not drink) any water while in Ravana's captivity, because the water must have been too saline for her liking. The demons, however, were used to drinking salty water.]

ततः पौरजनैः सार्धं नानोपायनपाणिभिः। विभीषणः ससौमित्रिरुपायनपुरस्कृतः॥47॥
दण्डप्रणाममकरोद्रामस्याक्लिष्टकर्मणः। रामो विभीषणं दृष्ट्वा प्राप्तराज्यं मुदान्वितः॥48॥
कृतकृत्यमिवात्मानममन्यत सहानुजः। सुग्रीवं च समालिङ्ग्य रामो वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्॥49॥

tataḥ paurajanaiḥ sārdhaṃ nānopāyanapāṇibhiḥ /
vibhīṣaṇaḥ sasaumitrirupāyanapuraskṛtaḥ //
daṇḍapraṇāmamakarodrāmasyākliṣṭakarmaṇaḥ /
rāmo vibhīṣaṇaṃ dṛṣṭvā prāptarājyaṃ mudānvitaḥ //

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kṛtakṛtyamivātmānamamanyata sahānujaḥ /
sugrīvaṃ ca samāliṅgya rāmo vākyamathābravīt //

After that, accompanied by a large crowd of residents of the city with numerous varieties of gifts in their hands, Vibhishan along with Laxman (47) came to Sri Ram and prostrated before him like a stick to pay his obeisance and respects once again after being formally proclaimed a king. He placed all those gifts as tributes in front of Sri Ram whose deeds and actions are most difficult to understand and decipher (i.e. are very mysterious and strange for everyone to understand). On the other hand, Sri Ram was very pleased on seeing that Vibhishan has got the reign of the kingdom (48).

Sri Ram, along with his younger brother (Laxman), felt highly relieved and thankful, very grateful and fulfilled, and very satisfied and accomplished[1]. Then Sri Ram embraced Sugriv and said (49)—

[Note—[1]That is because he could fulfill the promise he had made to Vibhishan that he would put him on the throne of Lanka. Surely, Sri Ram felt highly relieved at the turn of events, for otherwise, he would not have been able to live up to his reputation of being true to his words.]

सहायेन त्वया वीर जितो मे रावणो महान्। विभीषणोऽपि लङ्कायामभिषिक्तो मयानघ।।50।।
ततः प्राह हनूमन्तं पार्श्वस्थं विनयान्वितम्। विभीषणस्यानुमतेर्गच्छ त्वं रावणालयम्।।51।।
जानक्यै सर्वमाख्याहि रावणस्य वधादिकम्। जान्क्याः प्रतिवाक्यं मे शीघ्रमेव निवेदय।।52।।

sahāyena tvayā vīra jito me rāvaṇo mahān /
vibhīṣaṇo'pi laṅkāyāmabhiṣikto mayānagha //
tataḥ prāha hanūmantaṃ pārśvasthaṃ vinayānvitam /
vibhīṣaṇasyānumatergaccha tvaṃ rāvaṇālayam //
jānakyai sarvamākhyāhi rāvaṇasya vadhādikam /
jānakyāḥ prativākyaṃ me śīghrameva nivedaya //

'Oh the brave one! It is only due to your assistance and help that I have been able to conquer the great Ravana, and oh Anagh (one who is sinless, pure and faultless), it is also because of it (your help) that Vibhishan has been appointed to the throne of Lanka' (50).

Then he turned towards Hanuman who was standing nearby with a very humble, prayerful and submissive posture, and said to him, 'Take the consent of Vibhishan and go to the palace of Ravana (51). Give Janki (Sita) all the news about the death of Ravana and other events, and then inform me soon what reply she gives' (52).

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[Note :—When Sri Ram mentioned Ravana's palace he does not mean the residential quarters of the demon king but the surrounding garden where Sita was held captive.]

एवमाज्ञापितो धीमान् रामेण पवनात्मजः। प्रविवेश पुरीं लङ्कां पूज्यमानो निशाचरैः।। 53।।
प्रविश्य रावणगृहं शिंशपामूलमाश्रिताम्। ददर्श जानकीं तत्र कृशां दीनामनिन्दिताम्।। 54।।

evamājñāpito dhīmān rāmeṇa pavanātmajaḥ /
praviveśa purīṃ laṅkāṃ pūjyamāno niśācaraiḥ //
praviśya rāvaṇagṛhaṃ śiṃśapāmūlamāśritām /
dadarśa jānakīṃ tatra kṛśāṃ dīnāmaninditām //

Having got this instruction from Sri Ram, the most wise and intelligent son of the Wind God (Hanuman) entered Lanka and was worshipped and welcomed (i.e. was shown due respect as deserving a conquering general) by the demons (53).

He proceeded ahead and entered the palace of Ravana and saw Janki (Sita) sitting under the shelter of the Sinshapa (Sesame) tree. She was extremely emaciated, weak, miserable and distressed but was faultless, without blemishes and was pure (54).

राक्षसीभिः परिवृतां ध्यायन्तीं राममेव हि। विनयावनतो भूत्वा प्रणम्य पवनात्मजः।। 55।।
कृताञ्जलिपुटो भूत्वा प्रह्वो भक्त्याग्रतः स्थितः। तं दृष्ट्वा जानकी तूष्णीं स्थित्वा पूर्वस्मृतिं ययौ।।56।।

rākṣasībhiḥ parivṛtāṃ dhyāyantīṃ rāmameva hi /
vinayāvanato bhūtvā praṇamya pavanātmajaḥ //
kṛtāñjalipuṭo bhūtvā prahvo bhaktyāgrataḥ sthitaḥ /
taṃ dṛṣṭvā jānakī tūṣṇīṃ sthitvā pūrvasmṛtiṃ yayau //

She was surrounded by demonesses and was constantly thinking of and incessantly contemplating and mediating upon no one else but Sri Ram. The son of the Wind God (Hanuman) bowed before her most respectfully (55). Then he stood in front of her most politely, devotionally and with palms joined together in submission and humility. Seeing him, Janki (Sita) first remained silent, then she remembered the earlier occasion (when Hanuman had come in search of her, met her, delivered Sri Ram's signet ring, and had burnt Lanka) (56).

ज्ञात्वा तं रामदूतं सा हर्षात्सौम्यमुखी बभौ। स तां सौम्यमुखीं दृष्ट्वा तस्यै पवननन्दनः।
रामस्य भाषितं सर्वमाख्यातुमुपचक्रमे।। 57।।
देवि रामः ससुग्रीवो विभीषणसहायवान्। कुशली वानराणां च सैन्यैश्च सहलक्ष्मणः।।58।।

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रावणं ससुतं हत्वा सबलं सह मन्त्रिभिः। त्वमाह कुशलं रामो राज्ये कृत्वा विभीषणम्।।59।।

jñātvā taṃ rāmadūtaṃ sā harṣātsaumyamukhī babhau /
sa tāṃ saumyamukhīṃ dṛṣṭvā tasyai pavanānandanaḥ /
rāmasya bhāṣitaṃ sarvamākhyātumupacakrame //
devi rāmaḥ sasugrīvo vibhīṣaṇasahāyavān /
kuśalī vānarāṇāṃ ca sainyaiśca sahalakṣmaṇaḥ //
rāvaṇaṃ sasutaṃ hatvā sabalaṃ saha mantribhiḥ /
tvāmāha kuśalaṃ rāmo rājye kṛtvā vibhīṣaṇam //

Realising that he was the messenger of Sri Ram, her face lit up with joy. Seeing her calm and cheerful face, the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) began to tell her the message of Sri Ram in entirety (57).

He said, 'Oh goddess! Sri Ram, along with Sugriv and helped by Vibhishan, is very well, as also are Laxman and the army of monkeys (58). Ravana has been killed along with his sons, army and ministers. Sri Ram has sent me to you with the good tidings of his welfare as well as with the news that Vibhishan has been anointed to the throne (of Lanka)' (59).

श्रुत्वा भर्तुः प्रियं वाक्यं हर्षगद्गदया गिरा। किं ते प्रियं करोम्यद्य न पश्यामि जगत्त्रये।।60।।
समं ते प्रियवाक्यस्य रत्नान्याभरणानि च। एवमुक्तस्तु वैदेह्या प्रत्युवाच प्लवङ्गमः।।61।।

śrutvā bhartuḥ priyaṃ vākyaṃ harṣagadgadayā girā /
kiṃ te priyaṃ karomyadya na paśyāmi jagattraye //
samaṃ te priyavākyasya ratnānyābharaṇāni ca /
evamuktastu vaidehyā pratyuvāca plavaṅgamaḥ //

Hearing this pleasant message of her husband, she was overwhelmed with delight and exhilaration. She said, 'How can I please you (or reward and bless you)? I cannot see in the whole of the three worlds (i.e. anywhere) (60) any gem or jewel, or any other thing, to compare with the magnitude of the sweet, pleasant and endearing words that you have just said. [That is, I cannot adequately reward you for these most auspicious and honey-like words that you have just spoken.]'. When Vaidehi (Sita) said so, the exalted monkey replied (61)—

रत्नौघाद्विविधाद्वापि देवराज्याद्विशिष्यते। हतशत्रुं विजयिनं रामं पश्यामि सुस्थिरम्।।62।।
तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा मैथिली प्राह मारुतिम्। सर्वे सौम्या गुणाः सौम्य त्वय्येव परिनिष्ठताः।।63।।
रामं द्रक्ष्यामि शीघ्रं मामाज्ञापयतु राघवः। तथेति तां नमस्कृत्य ययौ द्रष्टुं रघूत्तमम्।।64।।

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ratnaughādvividhādvāpi devarājyādviśiṣyate /
hataśatruṃ vijayinaṃ rāmaṃ paśyāmi susthiram //
tasya tadvacanaṃ śrutvā maithilī prāha mārutim /
sarve saumyā guṇā saumya tvayyeva pariniṣṭhitāḥ //
rāmaṃ drakṣyāmi śīghraṃ māmājñāpayatu rāghavaḥ /
tatheti tāṃ namaskṛtya yayau draṣṭuṃ raghūttamam //

'More important than the treasure of gems and jewels as well as the kingdom of Gods for me is the fact that I can behold Sri Ram who, having eliminated the enemy, is victorious and present with a calm, contented and peaceful mind' (62).

Hearing these words of Maruti (Hanuman) the daughter of Mithila (Sita) said to him, 'Oh the Saumya one (i.e. one who is polite, courteous, gentle, and as beautiful as the moon)! All the auspicious qualities, values and virtues that exist are present in you (63). Now I shall see Sri Ram as soon as Raghav (Sri Ram) gives such orders for me'. Hanuman said 'alright' to her, bowed before her, and then set off to see (meet) the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) to convey her message to him (64).

जानक्या भाषितं सर्वं रामस्याग्रे न्यवेदयत्। यन्निमित्तोऽयमारम्भः कर्मणां च फलोदयः ।। 65 ।।
तां देवीं शोकसन्तप्तां द्रष्टुमर्हसि मैथिलीम्। एवमुक्तो हनुमता रामो ज्ञानवतां वरः ।। 66 ।।
मायासीतां परित्युक्तं जानकीमनले स्थिताम्। आदातुं मनसा ध्यात्वा रामः प्राह विभीषणम् ।। 67 ।।

jānakyā bhāṣitaṃ sarvaṃ rāmasyāgre nyavedayat /
yannimitto'yamārambhaḥ karmaṇāṃ ca phalodayaḥ //
tāṃ devīṃ śokasantaptāṃ draṣṭumarhasi maithilīm /
evamukto hanumatā rāmo jñānavatāṃ varaḥ //
māyāsītāṃ parityaktuṃ jānakīmanale sthitām /
ādātuṃ manasā dhyātvā rāmaḥ prāha vibhīṣaṇam //

He (Hanuman) told Sri Ram verbatim whatever Sita had said. 'For whom all these actions such as the war etc. were commenced, and who represents the fruit or the reward of all those actions (65)—now you must see (or meet) that goddess named Maithili (Sita) who is much tormented and overcome by miseries, sorrows, anguish and grief'. Hearing this advice of Hanuman, the most wise, sagacious, erudite and knowledgeable Sri Ram (66), in order to discard the illusionary, deceptive and shadowy Sita and retrieve and accept the original Janki (Sita) who had been put in the custody of the Fire God for safe keeping,

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thought to himself for a while, i.e. he pondered over how to do it, and then said to Vibhishan (67)—

[Note :—Sri Ram had placed Sita in the custody of the Fire God in Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 1-3, and had allowed a shadowy image of hers to be abducted by Ravana.]

गच्छ राजन् जनकजामानयाशु ममान्तिकम्। स्नातां विरजवस्त्राढ्यां सर्वाभरणभूषिताम्।। 68।।
विभीषणोऽपि तच्छ्रुत्वा जगाम सहमारुतिः। राक्षसीभिः सुवृद्धाभिः स्नापयित्वा तु मैथिलीम्।। 69।।
सर्वाभरणसम्पन्नामारोप्य शिबिकोत्तमे। याष्टीकैर्बहुभिर्गुप्तां कञ्चुकोष्णीषिभिः शुभाम्।। 70।।

gaccha rājan janakajāmānayāśu mamāntikam /
snātāṃ virajavastrāḍhyāṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitām //
vibhīṣaṇo'pi tacchrutvā jagāma sahamārutiḥ /
rākṣasībhiḥ suvṛddhābhiḥ snāpayitvā tu maithilīm //
sarvābharaṇasampannāmāropya śibikottame /
yāṣṭīkairbahubhirguptāṃ kañcukoṣṇīṣibhiḥ śubhām //

'Oh king! You go immediately, get the daughter of Janak (Sita) formally bathed, clothe her in clean and fine clothes, adorn her fully with all types of ornaments befitting her stature, and then bring her to me with all due respect and honour' (68).

Hearing this, Vibhishan took Maruti (Hanuman) along with him and immediately set off. Deputing old and aged demonesses for the job, he got Maithili (Sita) bathed (69), decorated with various ornaments and magnificent robes, and then seated her in a beautiful palanquin. He appointed numerous well-dressed and turned-up guards wearing jackets and head gear, and holding royal ceremonial sticks (batons or canes) etc. to protect the cavalcade, and then made his way to where Sri Ram waited for him (70).

[Note :—A palanquin is a well appointed wooden carriage in which lady guests of honour used to go from one place to another in ancient times. It was carried on poles by bearers on foot, guarded by attendants, and had curtains drawn up at the openings to enclose the lady from inquisitive eyes.]

तां द्रष्टुमागताः सर्वे वानरा जनकात्मजाम्। तान्वारयन्तो बहवः सर्वतो वेत्रपाणयः।। 71।।
कोलाहलं प्रकुर्वन्तो रामपार्श्वमुपाययुः। दृष्ट्वा तां शिबिकारूढां दूरादथ रघूत्तमः।। 72।।

tāṃ draṣṭumāgatāḥ sarve vānarā janakātmajām /
tānvārayanto bahavaḥ sarvato vetrapāṇayaḥ //
kolāhalaṃ prakurvanto rāmapārśvamupāyayuḥ /
dṛṣṭvā tāṃ śibikārūḍhāṃ dūrādatha raghūttamaḥ //

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At that time, all the monkeys came rushing forward eagerly to have a look at the daughter of Janak (Sita). Holding them at bay by their sticks/canes in all the directions, and amidst a lot of cacophony and tumult, the retinue of guards brought her near Sri Ram. Seeing Sita astride the palanquin from a distance, the best amongst the Raghus (Sri Ram) said (71-72)—

विभीषण किमर्थं ते वानरान्वारयन्ति हि। पश्यन्तु वानराः सर्वे मैथिलीं मातरं यथा।। 73।।
पादचारेण सायातु जानकी मम सन्निधिम्। श्रुत्वा तद्रामवचनं शिविकादवरुह्य सा।। 74।।

vibhīṣaṇa kimarthaṃ te vānarānvārayanti hi /
paśyantu vānarāḥ sarve maithilīṃ mātaraṃ yathā //
pādacāreṇa sāyātu jānakī mama sannidhim /
śrutvā tadrāmavacanaṃ śibikādavaruhya sā //

'Oh Vibhishan! Why are your baton-wielding guards stopping the monkeys (and preventing them from getting closer and having a look at Sita)? Let all the monkeys look at Maithili (Sita) as if she were their mother (73). And Janki (Sita) should come to me on foot'. Hearing his words, she (Sita) got down from the carriage (palanquin) (74).

पादचारेण शनकैरागता रामसन्निधिम्। रामोऽपि दृष्ट्वा तां मायासीतां कार्यार्थनिर्मिताम्।। 75।।
अवाच्यवादान्बहुशः प्राह तां रघुनन्दनः। अमृष्यमाणा सा सीता वचनं राघवोदितम्।। 76।।
लक्ष्मणं प्राह मे शीघ्रं प्रज्वालय हुताशनम्। विश्वासार्थं हि रामस्य लोकानां प्रत्ययाय च।। 77।।

pādacāreṇa śanakairāgatā rāmasannidhim /
rāmo'pi dṛṣṭvā tāṃ māyāsītāṃ kāryārthanirmitām //
avācyavādānbahuśaḥ prāha tāṃ raghunandanaḥ /
amṛṣyamāṇā sā sītā vacanaṃ rāghavoditam //
lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha me śīghraṃ prajvālaya hutāśanam /
viśvāsārthaṃ hi rāmasya lokānāṃ pratyayāya ca //

She walked slowly on foot and reached near Sri Ram. Seeing the illusionary/shadowy Sita who was created to accomplish certain tasks (i.e. to eliminate the demons) (75), Raghunandan (Sri Ram) said many ignominious and contemptible things which are not worthy to be mentioned (i.e. he made many derogatory and insinuating comments about her character and cast aspersions on her sincerity, loyalty, chastity, purity, truthfulness, honesty, trust-worthiness, integrity and her eligibility of being accepted by him). Sita just could not stand (tolerate) those caustic, taunting, scorching, unwarranted and uncalled for words of Raghav (Sri Ram) (76).

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So she said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Light a fire soon so that I can convince Sri Ram and make the world sure of my integrity' (77).

राघवस्य मतं ज्ञात्वा लक्ष्मणोऽपि तदैव हि। महाकाष्ठचयं कृत्वा ज्वालयित्वा हुताशनम्।। 78।।
रामपार्श्वमुपागम्य तस्थौ तूष्णीमरिन्दमः। ततः सीता परिक्रम्य राघवं भक्तिसंयुता।। 79।।

rāghavasya mataṃ jñātvā lakṣmaṇo'pi tadaiva hi /
mahākāṣṭhacayaṃ kṛtvā jvālayitvā hutāśanam //
rāmapārśvamupāgamya tasthau tūṣṇīmarindamaḥ /
tataḥ sītā parikramya rāghavaṃ bhaktisaṃyutā //

Assuming that Raghav (Sri Ram) also wants this to happen (i.e. that Sita should prove her integrity by the fire test to satisfy the skeptical world), Laxman assembled a huge pile of fire wood and lit it (78). Then the vanquisher of enemies (i.e. Laxman) came and stood silently besides Sri Ram. After that, Sita reverentially circumambulated Raghav (Sri Ram) (79).

पश्यतां सर्वलोकानां देवराक्षसयोषिताम्। प्रणम्य देवताभ्यश्च ब्राह्मणेभ्यश्च मैथिली।। 80।।
बद्धाञ्जलिपुटा चेदमुवाचाग्निसमीपगा। यथा मे हृदयं नित्यं नापसर्पति राघवात्।। 81।।
तथा लोकस्य साक्षी मां सर्वतः पातु पावकः। एवमुक्त्वा तदा सीता परिक्रम्य हुताशनम्।।82।।
विवेश ज्वलनं दीप्तं निर्भयेन हृदा सती।। 83।।

paśyatāṃ sarvalokānāṃ devarākṣasayoṣitām /
praṇamya devatābhyaśca brāhmaṇebhyaśca maithilī //
baddhāñjaliputā cedamuvācāgnisamīpagā /
yathā me hṛdayaṃ nityaṃ nāpasarpati rāghavāt //
tathā lokasya sākṣī māṃ sarvataḥ pātu pāvakaḥ /
evamuktvā tadā sītā parikramya hutāśanam //
viveśa jvalanaṃ dīptaṃ nirbhayena hṛdā satī //

Then the daughter of Mithila (Sita) bowed before the Gods and Brahmins even as the women folk of the Gods and demons and all the rest of the world watched in stunning shock and wonderstruck in awe (80). She went to the fire and said to the Fire God with palms joined together in prayer, 'If my heart never goes anywhere except Raghav (Sri Ram) (81), then, oh the Fire God who is an eternal witness to all in this world—protect me from all the sides'. Saying this, Sita circumambulated the fire (82) and entered the fiercely burning pile without any kind of fear in her heart as a true 'Sati' (a chaste, pure, honest and loyal woman of immaculate integrity who is vary honest towards her husband and even worships him as a living God) (83).

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दृष्ट्वा ततो भूतगणाः ससिद्धाः सीतां महावह्निगतां भृशार्ताः।
परस्परं प्राहुरहो स सीतां रामः श्रियं स्वां कथमत्यजज्ञः।।84।।

dṛṣṭvā tato bhūtagaṇāḥ sasiddhāḥ sītāṃ mahāvahnigatāṃ bhṛśārtāḥ /
parasparaṃ prāhuraho sa sītāṃ rāmaḥ śriyaṃ svāṃ kathamatyajajñaḥ //

Seeing Sita enter the fiercely burning fire, all the Siddhas (mystics, attained ones) and Spirits (here meaning creatures in divine form) became very agitated, anxious, worried and confounded. They said to each other in dismay, 'Alas! Inspite of knowing (the truth of) everything, why did or how did Sri Ram forsake Sita who is like a personified goddess Laxmi for him?' (84).

[Note—Sri Ram was not cruel and heartless, but the reason for him having got Sita enter the fire was to retrieve the original lady who had been entrusted to the safety of the Fire God prior to her abduction by Ravana. Since there cannot be two Sitas at the same time, the shadow had to be burnt. But the irony of the situation is this that inspite of having proved her integrity by fire, she was still exiled from Ayodhya due to some ridiculous accusation made by a citizen later on in Uttar Kand, canto 4. One begins to have real empathy for Sita who, after having gone through the horrendous ordeal of her captivity at Lanka, had now to prove her innocence! The very fact that Ram had instigated her and created such a situation that this comes about shows that he was sure that Sita was going to emerge unscathed form the fire, for otherwise he wouldn't have taken the risk after the horrible war, but the Lord had to pretend to be suspicious to keep tongues from wagging. But the world is such that even the Lord couldn't stop it, as is evident from Sita's second exile. The lesson is that no matter how hard we try, we cannot please the world!]

***

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 13

God's praise for Sri Ram; The Fire God appears with the original Sita; Departure for Ayodhya

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततः शक्रः सहस्राक्षो यमश्च वरुणस्तथा। कुबेरश्च महातेजाः पिनाकी वृषवाहनः।।1।।
ब्रह्मा ब्रह्मविदां श्रेष्ठो मुनिभिः सिद्धचारणैः। ऋषयः पितरः साध्या गन्धर्वाप्सरसोरगाः।।2।।
एते चान्ये विमानाग्र्यैराजग्मुर्यत्र राघवः। अब्रुवन्परमात्मानं रामं प्राञ्जलयश्च ते।।3।।

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

tataḥ śakraḥ sahasrākṣo yamaśca varuṇastathā /
kuberaśca mahātejāḥ pinākī vṛṣavāhanaḥ //
brahmā brahmavidāṃ śreṣṭho munibhiḥ siddhacāraṇaiḥ /
ṛṣayaḥ pitaraḥ sādhyā gandharvāpsarasoragāḥ //
ete cānye vimānāgryairājagmuryatra rāghavaḥ /
abruvanparamātmānaṃ rāmaṃ prāñjalayaśca te //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! About this time, the one thousand eyed Indra (the king of Gods), Yam (the Death God), Varuna (the Water God), Kuber (the God's treasurer), Lord Pinaki (Lord Shiva) who is most splendorous and radiant with divine energy and who rides a bull (1), Lord Brahma who is the best amongst those who are enlightened or well versed in the knowledge of the supreme Truth and absolute Reality and is the most wise and exalted in the creation, the various Siddhas and Charans (the mystics and celestial bards), sages and hermits, the Pittars (spirit of dead ancestors), the seekers of spiritualism, emancipation and salvation, the Gandharvas and Apsaras[11] (celestial musicians and damsels or courtesans of Indra's court) as well as serpents (the creatures of the subterranean kingdoms) (2) and many other exalted spirits, Gods and demigods—all of them came aboard their celestial planes to the place where Raghav was (in the battle field). They joined their palms in prayerful mode and said to Sri Ram (3)—

कर्ता त्वं सर्वलोकानां साक्षी विज्ञानविग्रहः । वसूनामष्टमोऽसि त्वं रुद्राणां शङ्करो भवान् ।। 4 ।।
आदिकर्तासि लोकानां ब्रह्मा त्वं चतुराननः । अश्विनौ घ्राणभूतौ ते चक्षुषी चन्द्रभास्करौ ।। 5 ।।

kartā tvaṃ sarvalokānāṃ sākṣī vijñānavigrahaḥ /
vasūnāmaṣṭamo'si tvaṃ rudrāṇāṃ śaṅkaro bhavān //
ādikartāsi lokānāṃ brahmā tvaṃ caturānanaḥ /
aśvinau ghrāṇabhūtau te cakṣuṣī candrabhāskarau //

'You are the active factor that does everything in the entire world, you are the witness to all, you are an embodiment and an image of Vigyan (i.e. of realisation and truthful knowledge of reality, of wisdom and enlightenment), you are the eighth of the different Vasus, and are Lord Shiva amongst the eleven Rudras (4).

You are the original and primary creator of the entire world in the form of Brahma, the four headed one. Ashwini Kumars are your nose, and the Sun and the Moon are your two eyes (5).

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[Note :—(i) These 'Vasus' are the various patron Gods who preside over the essentials of life; they are eight in number—Vishnu is the sustainer, Shiva who is the annihilator, Kuber who is the treasurer of the wealth of the Gods, the Sun, Water, Fire, Wealth represented by gems and gold, and 'Ray' representing glory and fame. The element 'Fire' is the most potent, prominent and essential force in creation, because without fire the world would freeze to death. Hence, the Fire-God is said to be the chief amongst the Vasus. The 'fire' element is the active force in creation and is primarily responsible for kindling the cosmic cauldron that set in motion the process, and once having set it in motion it then sustained it and would finally annihilate it by burning it to cinders. But here in the context of Sri Ram, the Gods are referring to Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer of the creation, is the Lord of Laxmi who is the Goddess of wealth, and is the supreme creator because Brahma, the old patriarch of creation who created the visible world and its creatures, was himself born atop the divine lotus that emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu. As Viraat Purush who is the passive male aspect of creation, Lord Vishnu utilizes the services of Laxmi who is the personification of the active forces of creation to create, sustain and annihilate the world. Further, since there is no defined list delineating which of the Vasus is the first and which is the eighth, it follows that Lord Ram embodies them all in himself, though primarily he is Lord Vishnu personified. He is as important as gold, one of the Vasus, which is the most precious wealth in the materialistic world.

(ii) Lord Shiva has eleven forms called Rudras. The 11 Rudras are the various manifestations of Lord Shiva—they are Mannu, Manu, Mahinas, Mahan, Shiva, Ritdhwaj, Ugrareta, Bhava, Kaal, Vamdeo, and Dhritvrat—Rig Veda 1/43/1. The word Rudra means one who is angry, terrible and wrathful. Amongst the Rudras, Lord Shiva is regarded as the most senior and enlightened. Hence, Sri Ram is treated as being equivalent as Shiva.]

लोकानामादिरन्तोऽसि नित्य एकः सदोदितः। सदा शुद्धः सदा बुद्धः सदा मुक्तोऽगुणोऽद्वयः॥6॥
त्वन्मायासंवृतानां त्वं भासि मानुषविग्रहः। त्वन्नाम स्मरतां राम सदा भासि चिदात्मकः॥7॥

lokānāmādiranto'so nityа ekaḥ sadoditaḥ/
sadā śuddhaḥ sadā buddhaḥ sadā mukto'guṇo'dvayaḥ//
tvanmāyāsaṃvṛtānāṃ tvaṃ bhāsi mānuṣavigrahaḥ/
tvannāma smaratāṃ rāma sadā bhāsi cidātmakaḥ//

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You are the beginning and end of the entire creation; you are eternal, everlasting, immutable and unchanging; you are without a birth or death and an image of eternal divine light that remains always lighted and perpetually shining brightly; you are invariably pure, uncorrupt and without any shortcomings, taints, defects, blemishes or faults; you are eternally wise, erudite, skilled, expert, sagacious, realised and enlightened; you are perpetually free and liberated (from all the delusions, entrapments and all other snares of this mundane, delusory and entrapping world); you are without any definitive and describable attributes, form, names and qualities (and hence you are called 'Nirgun'); and you are peerless, matchless, unique, one of your own kind, and without a second or parallel (6).

Oh Sri Ram! For those who are surrounded, covered or veiled by a sheath representing your maverick Maya (i.e. are under the influence of and enveloped by your deluding and magical powers that hide the reality and create an imaginary world of deceptions and misconceptions), you appear to be an ordinary man with a physical gross body, but those who perpetually remember and invoke your holy and divine name, always and without doubt see you as the supreme, eternal, transcendental supreme Consciousness (known as Brahm) (7).

रावणेन ह्रतं स्थानमस्माकं तेजसा सह। त्वयाद्य निहतो दुष्टः पुनः प्राप्तं पदं स्वकम्।। 8।।
एवं स्तुवत्सु देवेषु ब्रह्मा साक्षात्पितामहः। अब्रवीत्प्रणतो भूत्वा रामं सत्यपथे स्थितम्।।9।।

rāvaṇena hṛtaṃ sthānamasmākaṃ tejasā saha/
tvayādya nihato duṣṭaḥ punaḥ prāptaṃ padaṃ svakam//
evaṃ stuvatsu deveṣu brahmā sākṣātpitāmahaḥ/
abravītpraṇato bhūtvā rāmaṃ satyapathe sthitam//

Ravana had snatched from us our powers and our potentials along with our exalted status. So that wicked and evil rascal has died today at your hands and we have got back our lost position and honour'. When Gods had finished praying thus, the grandfather Brahma himself prayed to Sri Ram who is steady on the path of righteousness, probity, ethics, morality, propriety and truth, collectively called the 'Path of Truth' (9)—

[Note :—(i) The Gods etc. were more concerned about their own position and status than the tyranny that Ravana had unleashed on the ordinary creatures of the world. Even Goswami Tulsidas has asserted this fact of selfishness of the Gods in his venerated epic Ram Charit Manas in Lanka

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Kand, Doha no. 110, Chaupai no. 2 :— "आए देव सदा स्वारथी। बचन कहहि जनु परमारथी।।" That is, 'the Gods are always very selfish but they speak words as if they are very benevolent and worried about the welfare of others'. (ii) See also prayers of Indra and other gods in Lanka Kand, Canto 15, verse nos. 64-69.]

ब्रह्मोवाच

वन्दे देवं विष्णुमशेषस्थितिहेतुं त्वामध्यात्मज्ञानिभिरन्तर्हृदि भाव्यम्।
हेयाहेयद्वन्द्वविहीनं परमेकं सत्तामात्रं सर्वहृदिस्थं दृशिरूपम्।।10।।

brahmovāca

vande devaṃ viṣṇumaśeṣasthitihetuṃ
tvāmadhyātmajñānibhirantarhṛdi bhāvyam /
heyāheyadvandvavihīnaṃ paramekaṃ
sattāmātraṃ sarvahṛdisthaṃ dṛśirūpam //

Lord Brahma, the creator, said, 'Oh Lord! I pray to you who are Lord Vishnu personified; you are the cause of the very existence of all the creatures; you are enthroned in the heart of self-enlightened or self-realised persons; you are free from the confusions, uncertainties, dilemmas and consternations arising from whether to leave and abandon anything or accept it; you are beyond everything and are without a parallel and match, i.e. you are unique and one like yourself alone; you are the only supreme authority and majesty in the whole world; you reside in the heart of all (in the form of the microcosmic soul); and you are the witness to all that exists (10).

प्राणापानौ निश्चयबुद्ध्या हृदि रुद्ध्वा छित्त्वा सर्वं संशयबन्धं विषयौघान्।
पश्यन्तीशं यं गतमोहा यतयस्तं वन्दे रामं रत्नकिरीटं रविभासम्।।11।।

prāṇāpānau niścayabuddhyā hṛdi ruddhvā
chitvā sarvaṃ saṃśayabandhaṃ viṣayaughān /
paśyantīśaṃ yaṃ gatamohā yatayastaṃ
vande rāmaṃ ratnakirīṭaṃ ravibhāsam //

Sages and hermits who are without any worldly attachments, who exert/exercise control over their two vital wind (life) forces—'Pran and Apaan'—and restrain or check them in their hearts with a firm determination, a concentrated mind and a focused intellect, and who, at the same time, are able to cut through (puncture, destroy, smash, overcome, vanquish, conquer, spike, break or crush) all the shackles

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representing uncertainties, doubts, confusions and perplexities, as well as overcome the numerous tugs and pulls exerted by various types of infatuations, yearnings and desires for self gratifications and obtaining pleasures of the sense objects pertaining to this materialistic world, which are, however, nothing but harmful poisons—only such sages and hermits can have a divine view of the Lord in their hearts. I bow and pray most reverentially to such a Lord Sri Ram who is adorned by a jewel studded glittering crown with a tiara, and is as majestic, splendorous, radiant and glorious as the Sun (11).

मायातीतं माधवमाद्यं जगदादिं मानातीतं मोहविनाशं मुनिवन्द्यम्।
योगिध्येयं योगविधानं परिपूर्णं वन्दे रामं रञ्जितलोकं रमणीयम्।।12।।

māyātītaṃ mādhavamādyaṃ jagadādiṃ
mānātītaṃ mohavināśaṃ munivandyam /
yogidhyeyaṃ yogavidhānaṃ paripūrṇaṃ
vande rāmaṃ rañjitalokaṃ ramaṇīyam //

He who is beyond the influence, spell and reach of Maya (delusions, ignorance, hallucinations and illusions), who is the divine consort of Laxmi (i.e. who is Lord Vishnu himself), who is the original cause of the creation of the world, who is beyond the requirement of visible proof of existence (i.e. who cannot be measured by or compared to any known worldly yardsticks, standards or benchmarks to establish his authenticity and truthfulness), who destroys all Moha (attachments, infatuations, attractions, yearnings and desires) that exist in the world, who is praised by sages, seers and hermits, who is worthy of being meditated upon by the Yogis (ascetics), who is the founder, teacher, author and judge for the path of Yoga (meditation and concentration on the Lord), and who is complete in all respects—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to that Lord known as Sri Ram who gives happiness, bliss, joy and delight to the whole world, and is most charming, pleasing, enthralling, beguiling and beautiful in every way (12).

भावाभावप्रत्ययहीनं भवमुख्यैर्योगासक्तैरर्चितपादाम्बुजयुग्मम्।
नित्यं शुद्धं बुद्धमनन्तं प्रणवाख्यं वन्दे रामं वीरमशेषासुरदावम्।।13।।

bhāvābhāvapratyayahīnaṃ bhavamukhyai-
ryogāsaktairarcitapādāmbujayugmam /
nityaṃ śuddhaṃ buddhamanantaṃ praṇavākhyaṃ
vande rāmaṃ vīramaśeṣāsuradāvam //

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He who has no emotions of any kind whatsoever, i.e. who is perpetually neutral and equitable, being unmoved and unwavering, constantly remaining indifferent and dispassionate under all circumstances, whether favourable or unfavourable; whose lotus-like twin holy feet are worshipped, revered and honoured by the Lord who is the chief amongst the Yogis (i.e. Lord Shiva) and others as well, who is eternal, perpetual, permanent, immutable and everlasting, who is pristine pure, absolutely uncorrupt, without any shortcomings, blemishes or faults, who is most wise, realised, knowledgeable, erudite, sagacious and enlightened, who is without an end and conclusion, and who is like a wild fire for the multitudes of demons (representing evil and vile forces in this world)—I bow most reverentially and humbly pray to such a valiant and valorous Lord known as Sri Ram who represents the divine, ethereal cosmic sound called 'OM'[1]! (13).

[Note—[1]OM is the divine Mantra consisting of the 3 syllables or letters A, U and M. These three letters incorporate in themselves the entire gamut of creation right from its beginning until its conclusion. The fact that Lord Ram is an embodiment of OM is elaborately dealt with in an especial Upanishad called Ramottar-tapiniopanishad in its canto 2 and 3 which dedicated to the divinity of the Lord, an English version of which has been published by the author separately. Relevant portions of it are quoted here:—

(a) Ramottar-tapiniopanishad, Canto 3, verse no.1-5—

The 1st syllable of the divine word OM is the Hindi alphabet 'Aa' (अ) corresponding to the English alphabet 'A'. The son of Sumitra, Laxman, is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedant, he represents the 'waking state of consciousness' of the microcosmic soul called 'Vishwa'. [Amongst the four chief names of Vishnu, he represents the name 'Sankarshan'.]

The 2nd syllable of OM is the Hindi alphabet 'Oo' (उ) corresponding to its English counterpart 'U'. Shatrughan is a manifestation of this letter. In Vedantic terms, he is the 'dream state of consciousness' of the microcosmic soul called 'Taijasa'. [Amongst the 4 chief name of Vishnu, he stands for 'Pradumna'.] (1).

The 3rd syllable 'Ma' (म) of the divine sound OM corresponds to the English letter 'M'. It has manifested itself as Bharat. According to Vedant, he represents the 3rd stage of 'deep sleep state of consciousness' of the microcosmic soul called 'Pragya'. [He represents the 3rd name 'Anirudh' of Vishnu.] The 4th half-syllable ' ' added as a tail end of the 2nd letter 'U' is called the 'Ardha Matra'. This represents Sri Ram who symbolises the 4th state of consciousness called

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'Turiya' which is supreme, eternal bliss, or the bliss of self-realisation called 'Brahmaanand' attained during the last stage of 'Samadhi' (i.e. a trance-like state) of Yogis (ascetics) [Sri Ram represents the 4th name 'Vasudeo' of Vishnu.] (2).

The cosmic energy which is responsible for the creation, sustenance and annihilation of the world just by the virtue of her being associated with or being close to Sri Ram is the one who gives comfort and happiness to the entire creation (even as a mother does to her children, for the child identifies itself closer with its mother than it does with its father). (3).

That cosmic energy (referred to in verse no. 3) is called Sita. She represents the 'dot and crescent' (ॅ) mark on the written word OM (ॐ) without which the word OM remains un-adorned. [This mark is like a crown of OM.] Erudite and wise ones call her 'the essential, primordial Nature'. She is constantly associated with Brahma (Sri Ram) represented by OM (4).

The divine word OM is imperishable and immortal. The entire visible world is but a manifestation/revelation of that invisible divine entity. Whatever existed, whatever exists and whatever shall ever exist as well as any time-space dimension which is beyond these three are nothing else but a manifestation or an extension of OM. It encompasses all and is encompassed by all. [The word OM is the divine name referring to the entity called Parmatma, literally meaning the supreme Soul. It is the macrocosmic form of the microcosmic soul residing in the individual creature. Although the supreme Brahma is indivisible and cannot be fractioned, we hypothetically split his entire being into 4 stages or states of existence to fully understand or grasp his full form or nature.] (5).

(b) Ramottar-tapiniopanishad, Canto 2, verse no.1-2—

Sage Bharadwaj asked sage Yagyawalka— 'Oh Lord! Who is the one who provides liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation, or in other words, delivers the soul from this mundane, deluding and entrapping world and future transmigration (तारकं), and who is the one who gets the benefit of this deliverance, liberation, emancipation and salvation (तरतीति)?'

To answer this question, the famous sage Yagyawalka said— 'The Tarak Mantra (or a group of letters infused with divine powers which enables them to acquire the potential to deliver the soul of the creature from this world and provide it emancipation and salvation once and for all) is as follows— the Hindi alphabet 'Ra' (र) with the sign of the second vowel 'Aa' (आ) and a 'dot' (Anuswar ' ं ') on top, i.e. the word 'Rang' (रां). The second word consists of 'Raa' (रा) followed by the words

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'Maaye Namaha' (माय नमः). Hence, the full Mantra becomes 'Rang Ramaye Namaha' (रां रामाय नमः).

Besides this, the two other Mantras under this category of Tarak Mantra are the following :—'Ram Chandraye Namaha' (राम चन्द्राय नमः) and 'Ram Bhadraye Namaha' (राम भद्राय नमः). These three Mantras are respectively representative or symbolic of the supreme, primordial and divine sound OM which stands for the supreme essential truth and the supreme Brahma. They assume the names of 'Sat, Chitta and Anand' (सच्चिदानन्दाख्या) respectively (i.e. they stand for the eternal truth, intellect-mind complex as well as supreme and absolute bliss respectively). This is the way one should interpret and have trust as well as faith in them (or worship and adore them with devotion with this understanding) (1).

The divine word OM has 4 sound syllables— viz, A, O, U, M. But in Hindi, it has six syllables or letters as follows— the first is 'A' (अ) which is the 1st letter of the Hindi alphabet, the second is 'Oo' (उ) which is the 5th letter of the Hindi alphabet, the 3rd is 'Ma' (म्) which is the 38th letter, the 4th letter is the half-syllable ' ़ ', the 5th is the 'Anuswar' (dot ·) and the 6th is the crescent shaped 'Naad' (ॅ) placed on the symbol for the word OM. The final shape of the word OM is— ॐ . In this way, the cosmic, primordial sound OM is the Tarak Mantra. It is so called because it provides liberation to the creature from the shackles which tie it to this mundane world of birth and death. You must consider that word OM, or its synonymous word 'Rang' (रां), as the Tarak Mantra. It is worthy of being worshipped, adoration and contemplation. It provides deliverance from the horrible torments of the womb, birth, old age and death as well as other great fears from this world that the creature suffers from (2).]

त्वं मे नाथो नाथितकार्याखिलकारी मानातीतो माधवरूपोऽखिलधारी।
भक्त्या गम्यो भावितरूपो भवहारी योगाभ्यासैर्भावितचेतःसहचारी।।14।।

tvaṃ me nātho nāthitakāryākhilakārī
mānātīto mādhavarūpo'khiladhārī /
bhaktyā gamyo bhāvitarūpo bhavahārī
yogābhyāsairbhāvitacetaḥsahacārī //

You are my Lord; you are the one who completes and implements all the proposals and prayers made by me (i.e. I propose but you are the one who puts them into practice; or in other words, the success of all my endeavours are dependent upon you). You are beyond any established standards or benchmarks, any dimensions and measurements, any generalities and scales that are usually applicable

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to all other entities in this world. You are a personification of Madhav (another name of Narayan, Vishnu, the sustainer of creation and the consort of goddess Laxmi). You are the bearer, sustainer and nourisher of the whole world. You are attainable or accessible only by firm faith, sincerity, devotion, dedication, belief and conviction. You can remove the fears arising out of this mundane, entrapping, deluding and artificial world by remembering your form which is divine, ethereal, sublime, subtle and eclectic but esoteric and mysterious. You reside in, literally move about and remain ensconced in, the mind-intellect complex which has been purified by the practice of Yoga (meditation and contemplation) (14).

त्वामाद्यन्तं लोकततीनां परमीशं लोकानां नो लौकिकमानैरधिगम्यम्।
भक्तिश्रद्धाभावसमेतैर्भजनीयं वन्दे रामं सुन्दरमिन्दीवरनीलम्।।15।।

tvāmādyantaṃ lokatatīnāṃ paramīśaṃ
lokānāṃ no laukikamānairadhigamyam /
bhaktiśraddhābhāvasametairbhajanīyaṃ
vande rāmaṃ sundaramindīvaranīlam //

You are the beginning and an end of this traditional world; you are the supreme Lord of all the worlds. You cannot be understood, measured, comprehended, proved, derived at or deduced by any standard, yardstick, measurement, scale, method or experiment known to this world. You are the Lord who is worthy to be adored, worshipped, honoured, revered and praised by those who have sincere devotion, dedication, faith, conviction, belief and reverence for you and have spiritually inclined emotions and outlooks—I bow humbly in reverence to Sri Ram who is as beautiful and enchantint as a blue-lotus (15).

को वा ज्ञातुं त्वामतिमानं गतमानं मायासक्तो माधव शक्तो मुनिमान्यम्।
वृन्दारण्ये वन्दितवृन्दारकवृन्दं वन्दे रामं भवमुखवन्द्यं सुखकन्दम्।।16।।

ko vā jñātuṃ tvāmatimānaṃ gatamānaṃ
māyāsakto mādhava śakto munimānyam /
vṛndāraṇye vanditavṛndārakavṛndaṃ
vande rāmaṃ bhavamukhavandyaṃ sukhakandam //

You are beyond the need of any visible proof or evidence to establish your existence, majesty, divinity and authority (i.e. no proof

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or evidence is required to establish your existence or authority). You are without any pride, ego, haughtiness, vanity, impostering and arrogance. Which creature, who is surrounded by, under the influence of and engrossed in Maya (i.e. shrouded by delusions arising out of ignorance and misconceptions about the actual reality about this materialistic world), is capable or proficient and adept enough to know who you really and truthfully are?

Oh Madhav (literally meaning the divine consort of Laxmi; another name of Vishnu)! You are the revered and venerable one for the great sages, seers and hermits. Though you had praised, honoured and adored all the Gods in Vrindavan (during your manifestation as Lord Krishna), you are yourself praised, honoured and adored by all of the Gods themselves as well as by Lord Shiva in the form of Sri Ram. I bow and pay my obeisance to Sri Ram who is a root (treasury, fount) of bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility (16).

नानाशास्त्रैर्वेदकदम्बैः प्रतिपाद्यं नित्यानन्दं निर्विषयज्ञानमनादिम्।
मत्सेवार्थं मानुषभावं प्रतिपन्नं वन्दे रामं मरकतवर्णं मथुरेशम्।।17।।

nānāśāstrairvedakadambaiḥ pratipādyaṃ
nityānandaṃ nirviṣayajñānamanādim /
matsevārthaṃ mānuṣabhāvaṁ pratipannaṃ
vande rāmaṃ marakatavarṇaṃ mathureśam //

You are proved beyond doubt, confusion or uncertainties, and are the one who is being invoked, expounded upon and enunciated by the various scriptures along with by the Vedas (i.e. you are ascertained, proclaimed, demonstrated and established without any confusion by them) which unequivocally proclaim you as being eternal, immutable, truthful, unchanging and perpetual, as being an image of beatitude and felicity, as being without any alternatives and one of your only kind, as being an embodiment or an image of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, erudition, sagacity and realisation), and as being without a beginning and an end.

You have assumed a human form just in order to accomplish my pending work (that is, to protect the creation from the tyranny of cruel demons and other evil mongers). I bow in honour and reverence to Sri Ram who is blue-complexioned like the Markat Mani (blue sapphire), and are the Lord of Mathura (the city where Lord Krishna had slayed the demon Kansha) (17).

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[Note :—The reference to Lord Krishna as being the Lord of Mathura while praying to Sri Ram indicates that Brahma, the creator, sees no difference between Sri Ram and Sri Krishna, which indeed is the fact. Verse no. 16 has a similar reference.]

श्रद्धायुक्तो यः पठतीमं स्तवमाद्यं ब्राह्मं ब्रह्मज्ञानविधानं भुवि मर्त्यः।
रामं श्यामं कामितकामप्रदमीशं ध्यात्वा ध्याता पातकजालैर्विगतः स्यात्।। 18।।

śraddhāyukto yaḥ paṭhatīmaṃ stavamādyaṃ
brāhmaṃ brahmajñānavidhānaṃ bhuvi martyaḥ /
rāmaṃ śyāmaṃ kāmitakāmapradamīśaṃ
dhyātvā dhyātā pātakajālairvigataḥ syāt //

Those wise and thoughtful persons in this mortal world who would read and recite this prime and eternal Stotra (prayerful hymns)—which were first conceived and enunciated by Lord Brahma, the creator, and which are imbued and infused with the essential tenets pertaining to the supreme transcendental Brahm—with full devotion, faith, conviction, respect and honour, are sure to be liberated/freed from all the shackles and entanglements representing the evil effects pertaining to their sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors of all kinds. Such recitation or reading should be done by invoking Sri Ram who is of a dark complexion and is the fulfiller of all the wishes and desires of his devotees. This Stotra proclaims and establishes the reality and essence about the supreme Brahm (18).

[Note :—Verse nos. 10-18 are the prayers of Lord Brahma for Sri Ram.]

श्रुत्वा स्तुतिं लोकगुरोर्विभावसुः स्वाङ्के समादाय विदेहपुत्रिकाम्।
विभ्राजमानां विमलारुणद्युतिं रक्ताम्बरां दिव्यविभूषणान्विताम्।। 19।।
प्रोवाच साक्षी जगतां रघूत्तमं प्रपन्नसर्वार्तिहरं हुताशनः।
गृहाण देवीं रघुनाथ जानकीं पुरा त्वया मय्यवरोपितां वने।।20।।

śrutvā stutiṃ lokagurorvibhāvasuḥ
svāṅke samādāya videhaputrikām /
vibhrājamānāṃ vimalāruṇadyutiṃ
raktāmbarāṃ divyavibhūṣaṇānvitām //
provāca sākṣī jagatāṃ raghūttamaṃ
prapannasarvārtiharaṃ hutāśanaḥ /
gṛhāṇa devīṃ raghunātha jānakīṃ
purā tvayā mayyavaropitāṃ vane //

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Hearing this Stotra (devotional hymn) of the world's moral preceptor i.e. Brahma, the Fire God, who stands witness for the whole world, appeared on the site with the daughter of Videha (Sita) seated in his laps. She was adorned and looked marvelous with a pure, divine and glorious red-hued radiant glow or halo around her, and was wearing red coloured clothes as well as magnificent ornaments. He (the Fire God) said to the best among the Raghus (Sri Ram) as follows—'Oh Raghunath (Sri Ram)! You remove all the sorrows, miseries and distress of those who seek refuge and shelter with you. Accept Janki (Sita) who had been previously kept in my safe custody by you in the forest (at Panchvati) (19-20).

[Note :—Refer Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 2-4.]

विधाय मायाजनकात्मजां हरे दशाननप्राणविनाशनाय च।
हतो दशास्यः सह पुत्रबान्धवैर्निराकृतोऽनेन भरो भुवः प्रभो।।21।।

vidhāya māyājanakātmajāṃ hare daśānanaprāṇavināśanāya ca/
hato daśāsyaḥ saha putrabāndhavairnirākṛto'nena bharo bhuvaḥ prabho//

'Oh Hari (Sri Ram)! You had created an illusionary/shadowy Sita for the express purpose of destroying (i.e. killing) Ravana along with his sons, kith, kin and comrades etc. Oh Lord! By doing so, you have removed the burden of this earth (21).

तिरोहिता सा प्रतिबिम्बरूपिणी कृता यदर्थं कृतकृत्यतां गता।
ततोऽतिहृष्टां परिगृह्य जानकीं रामः प्रहृष्टः प्रतिपूज्य पावकम्।।22।।

tirohitā sā pratibimbarūpiṇī kṛtā yadarthaṃ kṛtakṛtyatāṃ gatā/
tato'tihṛṣṭāṃ parigṛhya jānakīṃ rāmaḥ prahṛṣṭaḥ pratipūjya pāvakam//

The illusionary/shadowy Sita who was like an image of her real self has vanished after having accomplished the task for which she was created'. Hearing these words of the fire God, Sri Ram worshipped and honoured him with great delight and a joyful heart, and then he gladly accepted Janki (Sita) who was most happy and cheerful (at this happy turn of events) (22).

स्वाङ्के समावेश्य सदानपायिनीं श्रियं त्रिलोकीजननीं श्रियः पतिः।
दृष्ट्वाथ रामं जनकात्मजायुतं श्रिया स्फुरन्तं सुरनायको मुदा।
भक्त्या गिरा गद्गदया समेत्य कृताञ्जलिः स्तोतुमथोपचक्रमे।।23।।

svāṅke samāveśya sadānapāyinīṃ
śriyaṃ trilokījananīṃ śriyaḥ patiḥ/

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dṛṣṭvātha rāmaṃ janakātmajāyutaṃ
śriyā sphurantaṃ suranāyako mudā /
bhaktyā girā gadgadayā sametya
kṛtāñjaliḥ stotumathopacakrame //

Then the husband of Laxmi (i.e. Vishnu) from whom the mother of the three worlds is never separated, seated her (Sita) on his lap (i.e. just next to him, close by his side). At that time, seeing the majestic radiance and stupendous beauty, magnificence, elegance, dignity and glory of Sri Ram along with the daughter of Janak (Sita), the king of Gods (Indra) became most exhilarated and was full of devotional emotions. He folded his hands in reverence and prayed (23).

इन्द्र उवाच

भजेऽहं सदा राममिन्दीवराभं भवारण्यदावानलाभाभिधानम्।
भवानीहृदा भावितानन्दरूपं भवाभावहेतुं भवादिप्रपन्नम्।।24।।

indra uvāca

bhaje'haṃ sadā rāmamindīvarābhaṃ
bhavāraṇyadāvānalābhābhidhānam /
bhavānīhṛdā bhāvitānandarūpaṃ
bhavābhāvahetuṃ bhavādiprapannam //

Indra said—'I always worship, honour and adore Sri Ram who looks most elegant, dignified, majestic and beautiful with a blue countenance like that of a blue-lotus, whose name is like a wild forest fire for the purpose of burning or destroying this materialistic, delusory, artificial and ensnaring mundane world which is like wild and dense forest (i.e. his holy and powerful name can burn the allurements and entrapments that this world presents to the soul diverting, it from its real goal of emancipation and salvation), whose blissful, most cheerful, enchanting and tranquil image/form is meditated upon by Bhavani in her heart (in other words, the blissful and pleasant image/form of Sri Ram resides in the heart of Parvati, the consort of Lord Shiva), and who is the liberator from the fetters that shackle a creature to this world (consisting of a vicious, never ending cycle of birth and death; he is a medium by which one can free oneself from this world and its shackles). I bow reverentially before Sri Ram who is the refuge or shelter for Lord Shiva and other Gods (24).

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सुरानीकदुःखौघनाशैकहेतुं नराकारदेहं निराकारमीड्यम्।
परेशं परानन्दरूपं वरेण्यं हरिं राममीशं भजे भारनाशम्।। 25।।

surānīkaduḥkhaughanāśaikahetuṃ narākāradehaṃ nirākāramīḍyam /
pareśaṃ parānandarūpaṃ vareṇyaṃ hariṃ rāmamīśaṃ bhaje bhāranāśam //

He is the only medium by which all the miseries, distresses, sorrows and torments of the Gods etc. are destroyed or eliminated. He is presently in the form of a human, though he is primarily without a form and is worthy of being praised and honoured through the medium of prayers. I worship, revere and adore that Lord Sri Ram who is the supreme Lord and the one who removes the burden of the earth, who is an image of supreme, eternal and immutable bliss, happiness, joy, peace and tranquility, who is worthy of being praised, honoured, revered and worshipped, and is Lord Hari (Vishnu) himself personified (25).

प्रपन्नाखिलानन्ददोहं प्रपन्नं प्रपन्नार्तिनिःशेषनाशाभिधानम्।
तपोयोगयोगीशभावाभिभाव्यं कपीशादिमित्रं भजे राममित्रम्।।26।।

prapannākhilānandadohaṃ prapannaṃ
prapannārtiniḥśeṣanāśābhidhānam /
tapoyogayogīśabhāvābhibhāvyaṃ
kapīśādimitraṃ bhaje rāmamitram //

He who is the shelter and provider of eternal happiness and succour of all kinds to those who seek refuge with him; he whose his name removes or destroys all types of miseries, sorrows, torments, tribulations, anguish and their likes of those humble devotees who have sought his shelter; who is the object of severe penances and austerities (Tapa), of deep meditation, concentration and contemplation (Yoga), and of thought and search by great and attained Yogis (ascetics); and who is a friend of the king of monkeys etc. (i.e. Sugriv and his ministers)—I adore, worship, honour and revere that Sri Ram who is a true and loyal friend personified (i.e. he is a sincere friend of all, or I worship him as my true and sincere friend because he has given me succour from the horrible torments that I was being subjected to by Ravana as a true and loyal friend) (26).

सदा भोगभाजां सुदूरे विभान्तं सदा योगभाजामदूरे विभान्तम्।
चिदानन्दकन्दं सदा राघवेशं विदेहात्मजानन्दरूपं प्रपद्ये।।27।।

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sadā bhogabhājāṃ sudūre vibhāntaṃ
sadā yogabhājāmadūre vibhāntam /
cidānandakandaṃ sadā rāghaveśaṃ
videhātmajānandarūpaṃ prapadye //

He keeps far away from people who are always indulgent and engrossed in pleasures of the sense organs and the objects of the materialistic world, while residing in the proximity and easy reach of those who are always firm in Yoga and self-restraint. He is an eternal and everlasting treasury or a root of eternal beatitude and felicity. He is an image and source of happiness, joy and delight for the daughter of Vaideha (i.e. Sita). I always worship, revere, honour and adore Sri Ram who has been born in the clan of king Raghu (27).

महायोगमायाविशेषानुयुक्तो विभासीश लीलानराकारवृत्तिः।
त्वदानन्दलीलाकथापूर्णकर्णाः सदानन्दरूपा भवन्तीह लोके।।28।।

mahāyogamāyāviśeṣānuyukto vibhāsīśa līlānarākāravṛttiḥ /
tvadānandalīlā kathā pūrṇakarṇāḥ sadānandarūpā bhavantīha loke //

You appear like a human being (or are in the form of an ordinary man) out of your own wish and just for the sake of fun or playful activity. While assuming this form, you have also assumed the characteristics and attributes of a human that you seem to possess by virtue of your own great deluding powers called Maya. That is, you have joined hands with your Maya, and this company has created an illusion that you are a human being and have all the attributes of a human being.

Those people whose ears get constantly filled by hearing your divine stories which bestow them with happiness and joy as well as bliss and peace, are the ones who become images or stellar examples of constant, persistent and consistent contentedness, joy, bliss, peace, tranquility and happiness (28).

अहं मानपानाभिमत्तप्रमत्तो न वेदाखिलेशाभिमानाभिमानः।
इदानीं भवत्पादपद्मप्रसादात् त्रिलोकाधिपत्याभिमानो विनष्टः।।29।।

ahaṃ mānapānābhimattapramatto na vedākhileśābhimānābhimānaḥ /
idānīṃ bhavatpādapadmaprasādāt trilokādhipatyābhimāno vinaṣṭaḥ //

Oh Lord! I had become intoxicated, haughty, proud, boastful and arrogant due to honours, respect, stature and privileges that I had as

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the king of Gods as well as by indulgence in drinking Som (which is the elixir like drink offered to Gods during fire sacrifices). I cared for none due to my arrogance, pride and haughtiness of being all in all (or the Lord) of the entire world. Now, with the grace and kindness of your lotus-like divine and holy feet, my haughtiness, arrogance and vanity of being the master and Lord of the three worlds has been eliminated and destroyed. [The three worlds are—the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds.] (29).

स्फुरद्रत्नकेयूरहाराभिरामं धराभारभूतासुरानीकदावम्।
शरच्चन्द्रवक्त्रं लसत्पद्मनेत्रं दुरावारपारं भजे राघवेशम्।।30।।

sphuradratnakeyūrahārābhirāmaṃ dharābhārabhūtāsurānīkadāvam /
śaraccandravaktraṃ lasatpadmanetraṃ durāvārapāraṃ bhaje rāghaveśam //

He who is adorned with glittering gem-studded arm bands and necklaces and looks most magnificent, handsome, elegant, enchanting and beautiful in them, who is like a wild fire for the destructions of demons who are a burden for this earth, whose auspicious face and countenance resembles a full Moon of a winter night, and whose eyes are as beautiful, enchanting, enamouring and attractive as a beautiful lotus flower, and whose beginning or end is most difficult to ascertain—I adore, worship, honour and revere such a Raghav (Sri Ram) (30).

सुराधीशनीलाभ्रनीलाङ्गकान्तिं विराधादिरक्षोवधाल्लोकशान्तिम्।
किरीटादिशोभं पुरारातिलाभं भजे रामचन्द्रं रघूणामधीशम्।।31।।

surādhīśanīlābhranīlāṅgakāntiṃ virādhādirakṣovadhāllokaśāntim /
kirīṭādiśobhaṃ purārātilābhaṃ bhaje rāmacandraṃ raghūṇāmadhīśam //

He whose body has the ethereal radiance and divine glow resembling that of the 'Indra Neel Mani' (a blue sapphire worn by Lord of Gods, Indra, as a crown jewel) and is as dark as the (rain bearing) cloud, who had protected all the creatures by slaying the demon Viradh etc. to establish peace, tranquility and order in this world, who is adorned by a crown and a tiara etc., and who is the valuable asset and a valued treasure of Lord Shiva—I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is the Lord of the clan of Raghu (31).

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लसच्चन्द्रकोटिप्रकाशादिपीठे समासीनमङ्के समाधाय सीताम्।
स्फुरद्धेमवर्णां तडित्पुञ्जभासां भजे रामचन्द्रं निवृत्तार्तितन्द्रम्।।32।।

lasaccandrakoṭiprakāśādipīṭhe
samāsīnamaṅke samādhāya sītām /
sphuraddhemavarṇāṃ taḍitpuñjabhāsaṃ
bhaje rāmacandraṃ nivṛttārtitandram //

He is sitting on a magnificent throne which is as glorious, splendorous, radiant and marvelous as millions of moons shining together with Sita by his side. She has a complexion as glowing and radiant as pure gold, and as splendorous, brilliant and dazzling as lightening. I adore, worship, honour, praise and revere such a Sri Ramchandra who is beyond the purview of any sorrows, anguish and distress as well as is without any sluggishness, inertia, indolence, lethargy, careless and apathetic attitude (i.e. he is most vigilant, alert, active and agile)' (32).

[Note :—Verse nos. 24-32 are the prayers of Indra for Sri Ram.]

ततः प्रोवाच भगवान्भवान्या सहितो भवः। रामं कमलपत्राक्षं विमानस्थो नभःस्थले।।33।।
आगमिष्याम्ययोध्यायां द्रष्टुं त्वां राज्यसत्कृतम्। इदानीं पश्य पितरमस्य देहस्य राघवः।।34।।

tataḥ provāca bhagavānbhavānyā sahito bhavaḥ /
rāmaṃ kamalapatrākṣaṃ vimānastho nabhaḥsthale //
āgamiṣyāmyayodhyāyāṃ draṣṭuṃ tvāṃ rājyasatkṛtam /
idānīṃ paśya pitaramasya dehasya rāghavaḥ //

After that, Lord Shiva, who was sitting with his consort Parvati on his left in an aerial vehicle in the sky, said to the lotus-eyed Sri Ram (33), 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! I shall come to Ayodhya to see you getting crowned (on the throne of the kingdom of Ayodhya). Presently, you must see (meet) your worldly father (i.e. the late king Dashrath who was in a spirit form)' (34).

ततोऽपश्यद्विमानस्थं रामो दशरथं पुरः। ननाम शिरसा पादौ मुदा भक्त्या सहानुजः।।35।।
आलिङ्ग्य मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय रामं दशरथोऽब्रवीत्। तारितोऽस्मि त्वया वत्स संसारादुःखसागरात्।।36।।

tato'paśyadvimānasthaṃ rāmo daśarathaṃ puraḥ /
nanāma śirasā pādau mudā bhaktyā sahānujaḥ //
āliṅgya mūrdhnyavaghrāya rāmaṃ daśaratho'bravīt /
tārito'smi tvayā vatsa saṃsārādduḥkhasāgarāt //

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Then Sri Ram saw Dashrath sitting in an aerial vehicle in front of him. Seeing him, he (Sri Ram) along with his younger brother (Laxman) became very happy and paid tributes to his father by putting his head on his feet (35). Dashrath embraced Sri Ram, smelt his head (as a token of deep affection), and said, 'Oh son! You have made me cross this world-like ocean of sorrows, anguish, distress, troubles and torments of all kinds' (36).

इत्युक्त्वा पुनरालिङ्ग्य ययौ रामेण पूजितः। रामोऽपि देवराजं तं दृष्ट्वा प्राह कृताञ्जलिम्।। 37।।
मत्कृते निहतान्सङ्ख्ये वानरान्यतितान् भुवि। जीवयाशु सुधावृष्ट्या सहस्त्राक्ष ममाज्ञया।। 38।।

ityuktvā punarāliṅgya yayau rāmeṇa pūjitaḥ/
rāmo'pi devarājaṃ taṃ dṛṣṭvā prāha kṛtāñjalim//
matkṛte nihatānsaṅkhye vānarānpatitān bhuvi/
jīvayāśu sudhāvṛṣṭyā sahasrākṣa mamājñayā//

Saying this, he (Dashrath) once again embraced Sri Ram, got due respect from him, and went away.

Thereafter, Sri Ram saw Indra standing there with arms folded and palms joined together in submission and honour of the Lord (37). Sri Ram said to him, 'Oh the one with a thousand eyes! By my orders, you must rain (pour) Amrit (elixir of life) and restore all the monkeys back to life who have died for me and are lying dead or unconscious on the ground' (38).

तथेत्यमृतवृष्ट्या तान् जीवयामास वानरान्। ये ये मृता मृधे पूर्वं ते ते सुप्तोत्थिता इव।
पूर्ववद्बलिनो हृष्टा रामपार्श्वमुपाययुः।। 39।।
नोत्थिता राक्षसास्तत्र पीयूषस्पर्शनादपि। विभीषणस्तु साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्याब्रवीद्वचः।। 40।।

tathetyamṛtavṛṣṭyā tān jīvayāmāsa vānarān/
ye ye mṛta mṛdhe pūrvaṃ te te suptotthitā eva/
pūrvavadbalino hṛṣṭā rāmapārśvamupāyayuḥ//
notthitā rākṣasāstatra pīyūṣasparśanādapi/
vibhīṣaṇastu sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatyābravīdvacaḥ//

Hearing this command from Sri Ram, Indra said 'alright' and poured Amrit as rain from the sky to revive all the monkeys back to life. All those monkeys who had been killed in the battle earlier, or were lying wounded and unconscious, were brought back to life as if they had just woken up from deep sleep. They were as strong and valiant and as happy and jubilant as they had been prior to the war.

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Then they all came to where Sri Ram was (39), but the demons who had fallen to the ground on being killed in the war were not revived back inspite of coming in contact with the Amrit[1]. About that time, Vibhishan prostrated himself and said prayerfully (to Sri Ram) (40)—

[Note :—[1]A very interesting thing has happened here. The rain of Amrit fell on both the monkeys as well as the demons. While the former were brought back to life, the latter weren't. Why? Well, the demons died at the hands of Sri Ram, Laxman, Angad and Hanuman etc., whereas the monkeys died at the hands of demons Ravana, Kumbhakarn, Meghnad etc. Having been slayed by the Lord himself or by his devotees, the demons had attained emancipation and salvation, had crossed the world-like ocean of birth and death. There was no coming back for them. From the spiritual point of view, the author would submit that the demons were more lucky and privileged than the monkeys in this aspect. Even Ravana was thousand times more lucky and fortunate than Vibhishan, for he had attained oneness with the Lord. It is a great privilege to die facing the Lord or his devotees, thinking of the Lord perpetually, albeit out of animosity or fear, and forcing him to come down from his exalted abode in the heavens right up to your doorstep to kill you. On the other hand, the monkeys could not attain emancipation and salvation because they had been killed by the demons who were sinful. So when Amrit rained down on the battle field, only the monkeys were revived but the demons weren't because the latter had already attained emancipation and salvation and had gone to the heaven from where there is no return.]

देव मामनुगृह्णीष्व मयि भक्तिर्यदा तव। मङ्गलस्नानमद्य त्वं कुरु सीतासमन्वितः॥ 41॥
अलङ्कृत्य सह भ्रात्रा श्वो गमिष्यामहे वयम्। विभीषणवचः श्रुत्वा प्रत्युवाच रघूत्तमः॥ 42॥

deva māmanugṛhṇīṣva mayi bhaktiryadā tava /
maṅgalasnānamadya tvaṃ kuru sītāsamanvitaḥ //
alaṅkṛtya saha bhrātā śvo gamiṣyāmahe vayam /
vibhīṣaṇavacaḥ śrutvā pratyuvāca raghūttamaḥ //

'Oh Lord! You are very benevolent, graceful, kind and munificent towards me. Now, I pray to you most respectfully to have a formal auspicious (i.e. purifying) bath with Sita to celebrate the occasion (41). Then tomorrow, you must adorn yourself along with your brother (Laxman) with the best of clothes, robes and ornaments. After that, we shall all proceed (to Ayodhya)'. Hearing these words of Vibhishan, the best amongst the Raghus (Sri Ram) replied (42)—

सुकुमारोऽतिभक्तो मे भरतो मामवेक्षते। जटावल्कलधारी स शब्दब्रह्मसमाहितः॥ 43॥
कथं तेन विना स्नानमलङ्कारादिकं मम। अतः सुग्रीवमुख्यांस्त्वं पूजयाशु विशेषतः॥ 44॥

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sukumāro'tibhakto me bharato māmavekṣate /
jaṭāvalkaladhārī sa śabdabrahmasamāhitaḥ //
kathaṃ tena vinā snānamalaṅkārādikaṃ mama /
ataḥ sugrīvamukhyāṃstvaṃ pūjayāśu viśeṣataḥ //

'My brother Bharat, who is very gentle and tender at heart as well as is my ardent devotee and follower, must be eagerly waiting for me wearing clothes made of birch and hairs matted on the head, all the while engaged in remembering and chanting the divine and holy name of the Supreme Brahm (literally 'Shabda Brahm' or the Word representing Brahm; here that word might be OM or Ram, because for all practical purposes both are synonymous with each other) (43). How can I bathe or adorn myself with rich clothes and ornaments without first meeting him? Hence, you should show special respect and honour to Sugriv and other chief monkeys (instead of me) (44).

[Note :—Bharat had been remembering, repeating, reciting or meditating upon the शब्दब्रह्म 'Shabda Brahma' which is the divine Mantra OM. It is called the 'sound manifestation' of the Supreme Lord, is called the 'Tarak Mantra' or the word that provides emancipation and salvation to the soul, i.e. liberates him or takes him across this ocean-like deluding and entrapping mundane world (see Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse no. 49, and Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse no. 51), and is regarded as being synonymous with the Nirgun Lord himself. And since the seed Mantra jka Rang which is the abbreviated form of 'Ram' is synonymous with OM, Bharat might have been repeating the word 'Ram' with the clear understanding that he is, in effect, repeating and concentrating his mind and intellect on the name of OM, the supreme Lord or Brahma and not Ram, his brother. That is why Sri Ram was so affectionately attached to Bharat than to anyone else.

The point to note here is that Dashrath had also called out 'Ram Ram' prior to his death but he did not attain salvation for the simple reason that he had been remembering Sri Ram as his son and not as the supreme Lord God.]

पूजितेषु कपीन्द्रेषु पूजितोऽहं न संशयः। इत्युक्तो राघवेणाशु स्वर्णरत्नाम्बराणि च।। 45।।
ववर्ष राक्षसश्रेष्ठो यथाकामं यथारुचि। ततस्तान्पूजितान्दृष्ट्वा रामो रत्नैश्च यूथपान्।। 46।।

pūjiteṣu kapīndreṣu pūjito'haṃ na saṃśayaḥ /
ityukto rāghaveṇāśu svarṇaratnāmbarāṇi ca //
vavarṣa rākṣasaśreṣṭho yathākāmaṃ yathāruci /
tatastānpūjitāndṛṣṭvā rāmo ratnaiśca yūthapān //

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Honour and respect shown to those monkey warriors will be equivalent to showing honour and respect to me—there is no doubt about it'. When Raghav (Sri Ram) had said so, a lot of gems, jewels, clothes and ornaments (45) were given to the monkeys liberally by the one who was the best among the demons (i.e. Vibhishan) according to their desires and tastes. Sri Ram saw the monkey warriors and their chief commanders being duly honoured and rewarded by gems, jewels etc. (and he felt very satisfied and contented) (46).

अभिनन्द्य यथान्यायं विससर्ज हरीश्वरान्। विभीषणसमानीतं पुष्पकं सूर्यवर्चसम्।। 47।।
आरुरोह ततो रामस्तद्विमानमनुत्तमम्। अङ्के निधाय वैदेहीं लज्जमानां यशस्विनीम्।। 48।।

abhinandya yathānyāyaṃ visasarja harīśvarān/
vibhīṣaṇasamānītaṃ puṣpakaṃ sūryavarcasam//
āruroha tato rāmastadvimānamanuttamam/
aṅke nidhāya vaidehīṃ lajjamānāṃ yaśasvinīm//

He (Sri Ram) praised the chief commanders of the monkey hordes showing them all respect and credit due to them. He then told them to go back (to Kishkindha).

Then Vibhishan brought an airplane called Pushpak which was glowing brilliantly like the sun (47). He (Sri Ram) boarded that plane, which was most excellent in every respect (i.e. was the best aerial vehicle available at the time), accompanied by the celebrated and virtuous Vaidehi (Sita) who sat shyly and bashfully close by the side of Sri Ram (almost appearing to be sitting on his left lap) (48).

[Note—Sita was feeling shy and bashful because all the eyes were fixed on her now. A chaste woman who has always remained away from male gaze, so much so that even in Lanka, Ravana had kept her in the guard of female demonesses rather than male demons, she was naturally self conscious.]

लक्ष्मणेन सह भ्रात्रा विक्रान्तेन धनुष्मता। अब्रवीच्च विमानस्थः श्रीरामः सर्ववानरान्।। 49।।
सुग्रीवं हरिराजं च अङ्गदं च विभीषणम्। मित्रकार्यं कृतं सर्वं भवद्भिः सह वानरैः।। 50।।

lakṣmaṇena saha bhrātā vikrāntena dhanuṣmatā/
abravīcca vimānasthaḥ śrīrāmaḥ sarvavānarān//
sugrīvaṃ harirājaṃ ca aṅgadaṃ ca vibhīṣaṇam/
mitrakāryaṃ kṛtaṃ sarvaṃ bhavadbhiḥ saha vānaraiḥ//

He was joined on the plane by his brother Laxman who was an expert in the use of the bow, a great archer, most valorous, valiant,

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brave, courageous and strong. Once seated on the plane, Sri Ram addressed all the monkeys and said (49), 'Oh Sugriv, the king of monkeys, Angad and Vibhishan! All of you, along with all other monkeys, have well lived up to the reputation of a good friend and have done your duty faithfully and diligently as a true friend (50).

अनुज्ञाता मया सर्वे यथेष्टं गन्तुमर्हथ। सुग्रीव प्रतियाह्याशु किष्किन्धां सर्वसैनिकैः।। 51।।
स्वराज्ये वस लङ्कायां मम भक्तो विभीषण। न त्वां धर्षयितुं शक्ताः सेन्द्रा अपि दिवौकसः।।52।।

anujñātā mayā sarve yatheṣṭaṃ gantumarhatha/
sugrīva pratiyāhyāśu kiṣkindhāṃ sarvasainikaiḥ//
svarājye vasa laṅkāyāṃ mama bhakto vibhīṣaṇa/
na tvāṃ dharṣayituṃ śaktāḥ sendrā api divaukasaḥ//

Now by my orders/instructions, all of you must go back to the places you wish to go. Sugriv, you should go back to Kishkindha soon with all your soldiers (51).

Vibhishan, be devoted towards me (or continue to have allegiance towards me) and stay in your kingdom here at Lanka. Now, even Indra as well as other Gods cannot harm you in any way (52).

अयोध्यां गन्तुमिच्छामि राजधानीं पितुर्मम। एवमुक्तास्तु रामेण वानरास्ते महाबलाः।। 53।।
ऊचुः प्राञ्जलयः सर्वे राक्षसश्च विभीषणः। अयोध्यां गन्तुमिच्छामस्त्वया सह रघूत्तम।।54।।

ayodhyāṃ gantumicchāmi rājadhānīṃ piturmama/
evamuktāstu rāmeṇa vānarāste mahābalāḥ//
ūcuḥ prāñjalayaṃ sarve rākṣasaśca vibhīṣaṇaḥ/
ayodhyāṃ gantumicchāmastvayā saha raghūttama//

Now, I want to proceed forthwith to the capital of my father at Ayodhya'.

When Sri Ram had said so, all those brave monkey warriors (53) and the demon king Vibhishan said in unison with submissively with the palms of their hands joined together in respect and prayer, 'Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! All of us want to accompany you to Ayodhya (54).

दृष्ट्वा त्वामभिषिक्तं तु कौसल्यामभिवाद्य च। पश्चाद्वृणीमहे राज्यमनुज्ञां देहि नः प्रभो।। 55।।
रामस्तथेति सुग्रीव वानरैः सविभीषणः। पुष्पकं सहनूमांश्च शीघ्रमारोह साम्प्रतम्।। 56।।

dṛṣṭvā tvāmabhiṣiktaṃ tu kausalyāmabhivādya ca/
paścādvṛṇīmahe rājyamanujñāṃ dehi naḥ prabho//

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rāmastatheti sugrīva vānaraiḥ savibhīṣaṇaḥ /
puṣpakaṃ sahanūmāṃśca śīghramāroha sāmpratam //

Oh Lord! We shall first see you crowned on the throne of Ayodhya, pay our obeisance and deep respects to mother Kaushalya, and only thereafter shall accept our own kingdoms. So please permit us to accompany you' (55). Then Sri Ram said, 'Alright. Sugriv, get aboard this plane quickly with your monkeys, Vibhishan and Hanuman' (56).

ततस्तु पुष्पकं दिव्यं सुग्रीवः सह सेनया। विभीषणश्च सामात्यः सर्वे चारुरुहुर्द्रुतम्।। 57।।
तेष्वारूढेषु सर्वेषु कौबेरं परमासनम्। राघवेणाभ्यनुज्ञातमुत्पपात विहायसा।।58।।
बभौ तेन विमानेन हंसयुक्तेन भास्वता। प्रहृष्टश्च तदा रामश्चतुर्मुख इवापरः।।59।।

tatastu puṣpakaṃ divyaṃ sugrīvaḥ saha senayā /
vibhīṣaṇaśca sāmātyaḥ sarve cāruruhurdrutam //
teṣvārūḍheṣu sarveṣu kauberaṃ paramāsanam /
rāghaveṇābhyanujñātamutpapāta vihāyasā //
babhau tena vimānena haṃsayuktena bhāsvatā /
prahṛṣṭaśca tadā rāmaścaturmukha ivāparaḥ //

On getting his permission, Sugriv along with his army, and Vibhishan with his ministers, very quickly/hastily/swiftly boarded the divine and magnificent plane called Pushpak (57). When all of them had boarded that plane belonging to Kuber, it became air-borne on the instructions of Raghav (Sri Ram) (58).

Sri Ram was most exhilarated and felt very successful, accomplished, contented and satisfied while flying on that elegant and majestic plane, and he resembled the 4-headed Lord Brahma flying away majestically on his Swan (59).

ततो बभौ भास्करबिम्बतुल्यं कुबेरयानं तपसानुलब्धम्।
रामेण शोभां नितरां प्रपेदे सीतासमेतेन सहानुजेन।।60।।

tato babhau bhāskarabimbatulyaṃ kuberayānaṃ tapasānulabdham /
rāmeṇa śobhāṃ nitarāṃ prapede sītāsametena sahānujena //

At that time, that plane—which was acquired by Kuber after doing severe austerities and penances—imitated/mimicked the Sun in its splendour, radiance and brilliance. It appeared all the more elegant, glamorous, stupendous and magnificent with Sri Ram along with Sita and Laxman seated in it (60).

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 14

En-route to Ayodhya; Reception at Bharadwaj hermitage; Meeting with Bharat

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

पातयित्वा ततश्चक्षुः सर्वतो रघुनन्दनः। अब्रवीन्मैथिलीं सीतां रामः शशिनिभाननाम्।।1।।
त्रिकूटशिखराग्रस्थां पश्य लङ्कां महाप्रभाम्। एतां रणभुवं पश्य मांसकर्दमपङ्किलाम्।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

pātayitvā tataścakṣuḥ sarvato raghunandanaḥ/
abravīnmaithilīṃ sītāṃ rāmaḥ śaśinibhānanām//
trikūṭaśikharāgrasthāṃ paśya laṅkāṃ mahāprabhām/
etāṃ raṇabhuvaṃ paśya māṃsakardamapaṅkilām//

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Glancing all around from the air, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) said to the princes of Mithila, the moon-faced Sita (1), 'Oh dear! Look at this glorious and famed city of Lanka which is established on the summit of mount Trikoot. And look here at the battle field which is rendered into a thick pasty slush of flesh and blood (of those killed or wounded in the war) (2).

असुराणां प्लवङ्गानामत्र वैशसनं महत्। अत्र मे निहतः शेते रावणो राक्षसेश्वरः।।3।।
कुम्भकर्णेन्द्रजिन्मुख्याः सर्वे चात्र निपातिताः। एष सेतुर्मया बद्धः सागरे सलिलाशये।।4।।

asurāṇāṃ plavaṅgānāmatra vaiśasanaṃ mahat/
atra me nihataḥ śete rāvaṇo rākṣaseśvaraḥ//
kumbhakarṇendrajinmukhyāḥ sarve cātra nipātitāḥ/
eṣa seturmayā baddhaḥ sāgare salilāśaye//

Here, there has been a frighteningly horrifying massacre of demons and monkeys. It was here that the king of demons Ravana fell dead at my hands (3). And it was here that Kumbhakarn, Indrajeet (Meghnad, the son of Ravana) and other great warriors were killed. This is the bridge that I got constructed over the ocean full of (heaving, surging, roaring, splashing, foaming, swirling and whirling) water (4).

एतच्च दृश्यते तीर्थं सागरस्य महात्मनः। सेतुबन्धमिति ख्यातं त्रैलोक्येन च पूजितम्।।5।।
एतत्पवित्रं परमं दर्शनात्पातकापहम्। अत्र रामेश्वरो देवो मया शम्भुः प्रतिष्ठितः।।6।।

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etacca dṛśyate tīrthaṃ sāgarasya mahātmanaḥ /
setubandhamiti khyātaṃ trailokyena ca pūjitam //
etatpavitraṃ paramaṃ darśanātpātakāpaham /
atra rāmeśvaro devo mayā śambhuḥ pratiṣṭhitaḥ //

Look, this famous pilgrim sight called 'Setubandh' (literally the spot where the ocean was stopped, bound or tamed; here meaning the place where the construction of the bridge was commenced). It is to be revered and worshipped by all the three worlds (i.e. by the heavenly, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds) (5). It is a very auspicious, holy and divine place, and it can destroy all the sins and evils merely by having an opportunity of seeing it (i.e. by looking at it with devotion, faith, belief and conviction). I have established (consecrated) Lord Shiva here in the form of 'Rameshwar Mahadev', or 'the great Lord who is the Lord of Ram' (6).

अत्र मां शरणं प्राप्तो मन्त्रिभिश्च विभीषणः। एषा सुग्रीवनगरी किष्किन्धा चित्रकानना॥ 7॥
तत्र रामाज्ञया ताराप्रमुखा हरियोषितः। आनयामास सुग्रीवः सीतायाः प्रियकाम्यया॥ 8॥

atra māṃ śaraṇaṃ prāpto mantribhiśca vibhīṣaṇaḥ /
eṣā sugrīvanagarī kiṣkindhā citrakānanā //
tatra rāmājñayā tārāpramukhā hariyoṣitaḥ /
ānayāmāsa sugrīvaḥ sītāyāḥ priyakāmyayā //

This is the place where Vibhishan had come to seek my shelter/ refuge along with his ministers. And look, that marvelous place consisting of gardens and mini forests (i.e. groves, orchards etc.), is the capital of Sugriv, and it is called Kishkindha' (7).

On reaching Kishkindha, on the instructions of Sri Ram, Sugriv brought his womenfolk led by Tara to meet Sita, and this made her feel very happy (8).

[Note :—This shows that Pushpak had come down to stop for a while at Kishkindha before proceeding further on its journey towards Ayodhya.]

ताभिः सहोत्थितं शीघ्रं विमानं प्रेक्ष्य राघवः। प्राह चाद्रिमृष्यमूकं पश्य वाल्यत्र मे हतः॥ 9॥
एषा पञ्चवटी नाम राक्षसा यत्र मे हताः। अगस्त्यस्य सुतीक्ष्णस्य पश्याश्रमपदे शुभे॥ 10॥

tābhiḥ sahotthitaṃ śīghraṃ vimānaṃ prekṣya rāghavaḥ /
prāha cādrimṛṣyamūkaṃ paśya vālyatra me hataḥ //
eṣā pañcavaṭī nāma rākṣasā yatra me hatāḥ /
agastasya sutīkṣṇasya paśyāśramapade śubhe //

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When Raghav (Sri Ram) observed that the plane has become airborne with them once again, he resumed his narrative to Sita and said, 'This is the Rishyamook mountain where I had slayed Vaali (9). Here, this is Panchvati where I had killed (Khar, Dushan and other) demons. There, down there, are the most pure, auspicious and venerable hermitages of sages Agastya and Sutikshan (10).

एते ते तापसाः सर्वे दृश्यन्ते वरवर्णिनि। असौ शैलवरो देवि चित्रकूटः प्रकाशते।। 11।।
अत्र मां कैकयीपुत्रः प्रसादयितुमागतः। भरद्वाजाश्रमं पश्य दृश्यते यमुनातटे।। 12।।

ete te tāpasāḥ sarve dṛśyante varavarṇini /
asu śailavaro devi citrakūṭaḥ prakāśate //
atra māṃ kaikayīputraḥ prasādayitumāgataḥ /
bharadvājāśramaṃ paśya dṛśyate yamunātaṭe //

Oh the beautiful one (Sita)! Look, those are the different hermits and ascetics visible everywhere, and oh goddess, this is Chitrakoot which is the best among the hills (11). It is here that Kaikeyi's son (Bharat) had come to plead with me (to go back to Ayodhya). Look, that is the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj visible on the banks of river Yamuna (12).

एषा भागीरथी गङ्गा दृश्यते लोकपावनी। एषा सा दृश्यते सीते सरयूर्यूपमालिनी।। 13।।
एषा सा दृश्यतेऽयोध्या प्रणामं कुरु भामिनी। एवं क्रमेण सम्प्राप्तो भरद्वाजाश्रमं हरिः।। 14।।

eṣā bhāgīrathī gaṅgā dṛśyate lokapāvanī /
eṣā sā dṛśyate sīte sarayūryūpamālinī //
eṣā sā dṛśyate'yodhyā praṇāmaṃ kuru bhāminī /
evaṃ krameṇa samprāpto bharadvājāśramaṃ hariḥ //

The river Ganges—which is the purifier of the three worlds—is visible there. And, oh Sita, there we can see Saryu which has pillars placed in it during the various fire sacrifices (done by the kings of Raghu's clan) (13). Oh graceful lady! Look, there is Ayodhya visible from here. Bow before it to show your respects'.

In this way, having reached the periphery of the city, Sri Ram (Hari) then took the plane back and reached the hermitage of sage Bharadwaj (14).

[Note :—(i) When the ancestors of Sri Ram performed any great fire sacrifices, they erected ritualistic pillars or shafts sunk in the river bed to commemorate that event. (ii) It is evident from verse no. 14 that the plane

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flew past the hermitage of Bharadwaj and came near Ayodhya. But then it was instructed by Sri Ram to go back to the hermitage of Bharadwaj which was located at the confluence of the 3 holy rivers at Triveni, present day Allahabad.]

पूर्णे चतुर्दशे वर्षे पञ्चम्यां रघुनन्दनः। भरद्वाजं मुनिं दृष्ट्वा ववन्दे सानुजः प्रभुः॥ 15॥
पप्रच्छ मुनिमासीनं विनयेन रघूत्तमः। शृणोषि कच्चिद्भरतः कुशल्यास्ते सहानुजः॥ 16॥

pūrṇe caturdaśe varṣe pañcamyāṃ raghunandanaḥ/
bharadvājaṃ muniṃ dṛṣṭvā vavande sānujaḥ prabhuḥ//
papraccha munimāsīnaṃ vinayena raghūttamaḥ/
śruṇoṣi kaccidbharataḥ kuśalyāste sahānujaḥ//

At the end of fourteen years of exile, on the 'Panchami day' which corresponds to the 5th day of any half of the lunar fortnight, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) met sage Bharadwaj and bowed before him with his younger brother (Laxman) (15).

Then the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) said to the sage with great respect and most politely, 'Have you heard anything (i.e. do you have any news)? Is Bharat all right with his younger brother (Shatrughan)? (16).

सुभिक्षा वर्ततेऽयोध्या जीवन्ति च हि मातरः। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं भरद्वाजः प्रहृष्टधीः॥ 17॥
प्राह सर्वे कुशलिनो भरतस्तु महामनाः। फलमूलकृताहारो जटावल्कलधारकः॥ 18॥

subhikṣā vartate'yodhyā jīvanti ca hi mātaraḥ/
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ bharadvājaḥ prahṛṣṭadhīḥ//
prāha sarve kuśalino bharatastu mahāmanāḥ/
phalamūlakṛtāhāro jaṭāvalkaladhārakaḥ//

Is everything all right in Ayodhya? Are our mothers all alive now?' Hearing these words of query of Sri Ram, Bharadwaj replied cheerfully (17), 'Everything is fine at your place. The great and noble gentleman Bharat has sustained himself and survived by eating fruits and edible roots, and is wearing matted hairs and clothes made of bark of trees (birch) (18).

पादुके सकलं नयस्य राज्यं त्वां सुप्रतीक्षते। यद्यत्कृतं त्वया कर्म दण्डके रघुनन्दन॥ 19॥
राक्षसानां विनाशं च सीताहरणपूर्वकम्। सर्वं ज्ञातं मया राम तपसा ते प्रसादतः॥ 20॥

pāduke sakalaṃ nyasya rājyaṃ tvāṃ supratīkṣate/
yadyatkṛtaṃ tvayā karma daṇḍake raghunandana//

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rākṣasānāṃ vināśaṃ ca sītāharaṇapūrvakam /
sarvaṃ jñātaṃ mayā rāma tapasā te prasādataḥ //

He has put the burden (of the day to day administration) of the kingdom on your sandals, and himself is waiting eagerly and anxiously for your auspicious and most welcome arrival. Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! All the deeds that you had done in the Dandakaranya forest (such as the slaying of demons, meeting with sages and providing them with fearlessness and liberation from this mundane world) (19), as well as the way you have killed the demons after Sita was abducted (this refers to the epic war at Lanka)—I have come to know all about it with the mystical powers that I have acquired by doing austerities, penances and spiritual practices, but they are all due to your grace (20).

त्वं ब्रह्म परमं साक्षादादिमध्यान्तवर्जितः। त्वमग्रे सलिलं सृष्ट्वा तत्र सुप्तोऽसि भूतकृत्।।21।।
नारायणोऽसि विश्वात्मन्नराणामन्तरात्मकः। त्वन्नाभिकमलोत्पन्नो ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः।।22।।

tvaṃ brahma paramaṃ sākṣādādimadhyāntavarjitaḥ /
tvamagre salilaṃ sṛṣṭvā tatra supto'si bhūtakṛt //
nārāyaṇo'si viśvātmannarāṇāmantarātmakaḥ /
tvannābhikamalotpanno brahmā lokapitāmahaḥ //

You are the supreme transcendental Brahm personified. You are without a beginning, middle or an end. You are the creator of all the elements. [The five elements are space, air, water, fire, earth.] To start with, you had created water to sleep or recline on it[1]. [This refers to the reclining posture of Lord Vishnu on the legendary Sheshnath in the Kshir Sagar.] (21). Oh the soul (Atma) of the whole world[2]. You reside in all the living creatures as their Atma or soul that dwells in their bosom (or, in other words, you are present in all the creatures as their microcosmic soul which lends each creature its independent life). Hence, you are called Narayan[3]. Lord Brahma who has been born out of the divine lotus emerging from your navel, is the patriarch (literally, a grand father) of the whole world/creation (22).

[Note :—[1]Verse no. 21 clearly establishes the universally held scientific belief that water is the basic requirement of life—no life can be sustained without it. So, the Lord created water first.

[2]Here the soul is the macrocosmic soul; the word also is used as a metaphor for the essence of anything. So, the sage means to say that the Lord is the essence and the primary truth and absolute reality of creation, while the

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rest of all that is visible are only the different and varied manifestation of the same essence.

[3]At the macro level of the cosmos, Narayan represents the Viraat Purush who is the macrocosmic gross body of the creation whose soul is the Brahm. The same thing at the micro level is replicated in the form of the individual creature that is an image of Narayan or Viraat, and therefore the soul or Atma of the creature is a micro form of Brahm.]

अतस्त्वं जगतामीशः सर्वलोकनमस्कृतः। त्वं विष्णुर्जानकी लक्ष्मीः शेषोऽयं लक्ष्मणाभिधः।। 23।।
आत्मना सृजसीदं त्वमात्मन्येवात्ममायया। न सज्जसे न भोवत्त्वं चिच्छक्त्या सर्वसाक्षिकः।।24।।

atastvaṃ jagatāmīśaḥ sarvalokanamaskṛtaḥ/
tvaṃ viṣṇurjānakī lakṣmīḥ śeṣo'yaṃ lakṣmaṇābhidhaḥ//
ātmanā sṛjasīdaṃ tvamātmanyevātmamāyayā/
na sajjase na bhovattvaṃ cicchaktyā sarvasākṣikaḥ//

Hence, you are worshipped, honoured, adored and revered by the whole world as well as are its Lord. You are Lord Vishnu himself personified; Janki (Sita) is Laxmi herself, while Laxman is Sheshnath (23). You create and establish this whole world yourself (with no external assistance) within yourself utilizing your Maya[1]. You remain detached and indifferent to everything just like the sky element[2].

You, as the Atma, are a witness[3] to all that is happening on the strength of your faculty of reasoning and thoughts, the powers of understanding and paying attention, and the ability to recollect and store information that are characteristic of the conscious powers exhibited by the mind and intellect apparatus (24).

[Note—[1]The Lord used his delusion creating powers, called Maya, to conceive the world out of nothing, as if by magic, and based it on his imagination and visionary potentials. The use of the word Maya is significant here in the sense that it emphasises that the whole world is merely an imaginary conception of the supreme Lord in his mind. Anything conceptualized in the mind remains there until it is converted into some material form so as to make it visible and realistic. Once the Lord conceived it, he was so enchanted by his own creative powers that he decided to make it more realistic and give it some time to remain stable so that he could marvel at it before he would wipe the slate clean once again. For that purpose, the Lord utilised his maverick powers to create an image of what he had conceptualized in his mind. This image was so realistic that it appeared to be the actual thing just like a lively painting by an expert painter that sometimes surpasses the beauty of the original scene. Maya was merely a tool that the expert Lord used to reveal his handiwork.

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[2]The sky has so many celestial bodies in it, but it remains distinct from them. There are umpteen number of debris floating in the sky, but they do not affect the basic nature and characteristic of the sky. There are myriad colours in the day sky, and the night sky appears dark, but neither of them are the real colour of the sky, for the sky is colourless. Similarly, the supreme Lord has created the whole world which is harboured in his bosom, but like the sky he is not at all affected by them; he remains totally unscarred by them and their taints and other characteristics. Even as the sky/space is present everywhere, still it is not involved in anything in which it is present, you too are an integral part of all that exists without getting involved with or attached to anything. See Kishkindha Kand, Canto 5, verse no. 23.

[3]The Atma acts through the subtle body consisting of the mind-intellect instrument and it witnesses all that the gross body consisting of the 10 sense organs does vis-ë-vis the external world. As such, the Atma is only a witness to the external world and not a participant in the activities/ deeds pertaining to it.]

बहिरन्तश्च भूतानां त्वमेव रघुनन्दन। पूर्णोऽपि मूढदृष्टीनां विच्छिन्न इव लक्ष्यसे।। 25।।
जगत्त्वं जगदाधारस्त्वमेव परिपालकः। त्वमेव सर्वभूतानां भोक्ता भोज्यं जगत्पते।। 26।।

bahirantaśca bhūtānāṃ tvameva raghunandana/
pūrṇo'pi mūḍhadṛṣṭīnāṃ vicchinna iva lakṣyase//
jagattvaṃ jagadādhārastvameva paripālakaḥ/
tvameva sarvabhūtānāṃ bhoktā bhojyaṃ jagatpate//

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! You are the one who prevails (pervades) both internally as well as externally in all the creatures. That is why you appear to have a separate existence vis-ë-vis the creature to those who are foolish, stupid and of a low intellect (because they are duds and ignorant of the reality about you) inspite of the fact that you are complete, indivisible and immutable in all respects[1]. (25).

Oh Lord of the world! You are the world personified (i.e. you represent all that is known as the universe, the whole creation, as well as its essential elements); you are the sustainer and pivot of it. You consume all the mortal creatures as their death, and you are consumed by them as their food and nourishment[2] (26).

[Note—[1]You appear to be have a formed existence as the Atma living in the creature who is visible with a distinctive body as well as an unformed one as the sublime and subtle Lord who cannot be seen and measured in tangible terms, which are called respectively Sagun and Nirgun forms.

It means that there is nothing to complement or supplement you, there is

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no prefix or suffix needed to establish your full and true identity and nature. There is nothing beyond you and there is nothing without you. You are complete, immutable, unequivocal, indivisible, absolute, omnipresent, all-pervading and all-encompassing. You are the essential, basic and intrinsic part of all—both animate as well as inanimate—that exists in the present, ever existed in the past, or shall ever exist in the future. You cannot be partitioned or divided into fragments or parts. You are one complete whole.

[2]This is a typical example of the pair of opposites that are equally true. Death consumes the creature by killing it, and this is the opposite of sustaining it by the means of food eaten by it. On the one hand the Lord acts in his capacity as the Kaal which is death deified, and on the other hand he sustains the creature as the vital life sustaining food that it eats. Both are true because since there is nothing in this creation that is not Brahm, it obviously follows that both the good as well as the bad must be Brahm. Therefore, both life and death are the two aspects of the same Brahm.

By extension, it also means that since you, Sri Ram, are all pervading and all encompassing as well as intrinsic to all that ever existed, the objects of this world which a creature enjoys for his so-called comfort or pleasure are nothing else but your myriad different forms. This realisation makes the creature wise and enlightened. It can never misuse them once this realisation dawns in it. By the same logic, since you are present in the food which the creature eats, you sustain or nourish its body in the form of nutrients. Similarly, after death, the mortal body disintegrates into the five basic elements of earth, fire, water, air and sky which are the ingredients of the whole universe. Again, since the Lord pervades in these basic building blocks of the whole creation, it follows that the creature's separate identity is annihilated and merged back into its basic, elementary ingredients.]

दृश्यते श्रूयते यद्यत्स्मर्यते वा रघूत्तम। त्वमेव सर्वमखिलं त्वद्विनान्यन्न किञ्चन।। 27।।

dṛśyate śrūyate yadyatsmaryate vā raghūttama/
tvameva sarvamakhilaṃ tvadvināṇyanna kiñcana//

Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! Whatever is seen, whatever is visible, whatever is heard, and whatever is remembered and thought about, are you and nothing else. There is nothing besides you or beyond you in this world (27).

माया सृजति लोकांश्च स्वगुणैरहमादिभिः। त्वच्छक्तिप्रेरिता राम तस्मात्त्वय्युपचर्यते।। 28।।

māyā sṛjati lokāṁśca svaguṇairahamādibhiḥ/
tvacchaktipreritā rāma tasmāttvayyupacaryate//

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[Verse no.28 and 29 describe how Maya creates this illusionary world of deception and various faults.]

Oh Sri Ram! It is at your inspiration, using your stupendous Shakti (powers and potentials), at your behest, and as per your wish that Maya creates this whole world infused and injected with all its characteristic features, such as, inter-alia, the quality of having 'Ahankar' (arrogance, ego, pride, haughtiness, vanity, boastfulness etc.) This is why you are blamed (accused) for all this deluding creation[1] (28).

[Note—[1]It is out of ignorance that one says that 'you', i.e. Lord Ram in his primary form as the supreme transcendental Brahm or Lord Vishnu, are the creator of this myriad world with all its faults and blemishes, evils and vices, entrapments and delusions, shortcomings and drawbacks, whereas in actual fact it is your Maya which has done it. Maya had simply employed your great powers to create, which you had delegated to her in order to enable it to carry out your general mandate to create, but once it got going, it lend its own flavor to it just like a master gives a brief to his servant or cook to prepare a meal and then the cook uses that excuse to create a wide variety of dishes the details of which had been decided by the cook himself and the master had no say in it, except the general instruction of cooking a meal. If suppose the cook has used a lot of spices and condiments, then one cannot accuse the master of spoiling the meal; it is the cook who is responsible for it. But once the meal is ready, there is nothing that can be done except to throw it away. In the larger picture of things, the Brahm had ordered the Maya, his maid, to prepare this painting known as the world, and then Maya used this sanction by the supreme Lord to do her own bit in order to please him and, in the process, outsmarted him by creating a creation that even Brahm was wonderstruck to behold. Since Maya had his express orders, Brahm could not even blame her for what she had done, because the details were left to her and she did what she was good at.

Again, even as each original thing has an indelible mark, a special quality that reflects the character and skills of the creator, the world created by Maya also had its share of characters and qualities that are reflective of the hand that created it—and that hand was that of the Lord's maid called Maya. So logically therefore, the Lord cannot be accused of so many faults that are associated with the world that Maya created. In fact, the word 'Maya' itself means something that is illusive, deceptive and false.

It is like a world of magic created by the magician, and if one, out of one's ignorance and foolishness thinks that this world is real and allows himself to be deluded by its charms, then the magician cannot be blamed because, to begin with, one is already aware that what he sees is a magical show,

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and even if he is unaware of it, there are other wise ones who tell him that it is so. If one still falls into the trap, then say how the magician can be blamed for the consequences of such ignorance and foolishness? In our example, Brahm is the magician, and the illusionary world is the magical powers that he possesses which are on display. The wise ones are the sages and seers who elucidate upon the scriptures and tell the creature to be wary, but if the creature does not pay heed, say what has the magician and the sage can do about is, except to wind up the game. This is exactly what Brahm does at the end of one cycle of creation when the fairies springing out of the Pandora's Box just go out of hand to create the Frankenstein Monster.]

यथा चुम्बकसान्निध्याच्चलन्त्येवायसादयः। जडास्तथा त्वया दृष्टा माया सृजति वै जगत्।। 29।।

yathā cumbakasānnidhyāccalantyevāyasādayaḥ/
jaḍāstathā tvayā dṛṣṭā māyā sṛjati vai jagat//

Even as inanimate things like iron become mobile and active under the attractive or repulsive influences/forces of a live magnet, so do Maya creates this whole universe/creation when you glance at it, though it is inert in itself[1] The driving force here is the invisible power of the magnet which infuses the iron with the power to move. The force which activates the Maya is you and you alone (29).

[Note—[1]Here, the Lord is likened to a magnet, and the Maya is likened to the magnetic force that makes the piece of lifeless iron, which stands for the gross and lifeless world, to move and show signs of life. Since Maya cannot be seen even as the magnetic forces of a magnet cannot be visibly seen or perceived except being understood by logic and knowledge of physics and magnetism, one accuses the Lord of creating this world with its myriad characteristics. Even as the iron piece would show signs of movement inspite of the magnet not desiring at all that it does so, the very proximity of the two automatically creates such a situation. Only wise ones realise that the iron is inane and it is the magnet that is responsible for its life, and whatever signs of life that the iron shows is illusive for as soon as the magnet is removed, the iron would not move inspite of it now wanting to do now. Please also refer to Baal Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 18-19]

देहद्वयमदेहस्य तव विश्वं रिरक्षिषोः। विराट् स्थूलं शरीरं ते सूत्रं सूक्ष्ममुदाहृतम्।। 30।।

dehadvayamadehasya tava viśvaṃ rirakṣiṣoḥ/
virāṭ sthūlaṃ śarīraṃ te sūtraṃ sūkṣmamudāhṛtam//

In order to protect (i.e. provide succour and solace to, sustain and nourish) the whole world, you (i.e. Brahm as Lord Vishnu, whose

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incarnation Lord Ram is) have assumed two forms though primarily you have no body per se. Your gross body is called Viraat, and your minute, microscopic body is called Sutra [That is, the same Viraat resides in the soul of all the creation in the form of its microcosmic counterpart called 'Sutra' which literally means a miniscule form.] (30).

[Note :—According to the theory of Vedant, the Lord has two forms– Macrocosmic and Microcosmic. The macrocosmic form of the Lord is the Viraat which is huge, large, colossus, vast, gigantic, and beyond all measurement. The microcosmic form of the Lord is the miniscule creature of this world. The gross body of the Lord vis-ë-vis the gross body of the creature are clarified Diagrammatically below :—

Microcosmic (creature)		**Macrocosmic (Viraat Lord)**
(i) Individual gross body (food+vital-air sheath)	=	Total of all gross bodies is called Viraat
(ii) Individual subtle body (the mind-intellect sheath)	=	Total of the subtle bodies is called Hiranyagarbha
(iii) Individual causal body (bliss sheath)	=	Total of causal bodies is called Ishwara
This is the single creature		**This is the sum total of all the creatures represented by the Lord.**

This concept is also emphasized in detail in Aranya Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 25-27 and its footnote. Further, explanations and diagrams are appended to this book in a separate appendix no. 2]

विराजः सम्भवन्त्येते अवताराः सहस्त्रशः। कार्यान्ते प्रविशन्त्येव विराजं रघुनन्दन।। 31।।
अवतारकथां लोके ये गायन्ति गृणन्ति च। अनन्यमनसो मुक्तिस्तेषामेव रघूत्तम।। 32।।

virājaḥ sambhavantyete avatārāḥ sahasraśaḥ/
kāryānte praviśantyeva virājaṃ raghunandana//
avatārakathāṃ loke ye gāyanti gṛṇanti ca/
ananyamanaso muktisteṣāmeva raghūttama//

Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! All the thousands of incarnations that appear in this world have their origin in your Viraat form, and when their purpose is served (fulfilled) they merge/coalesce back into your Viraat form (31).

Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram). Those persons who devotedly, with due faith and conviction, hear and sing the divine and holy stories related to your various revelations/manifestations/ incarnations are sure to find emancipation and salvation (i.e. are sure to be liberated from the shackles of this mundane, illusionary,

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entrapping and sinful world, and never enter this vicious cycle of birth and death again) (32).

[Note :—Verse nos. 21-32 can be called the gospel of sage Bharadwaj.]

त्वं ब्रह्मणा पुरा भूमेर्भारहाराय राघव। प्रार्थितस्तपसा तुष्टस्त्वं जातोऽसि रघोः कुले।। 33।।
देवकार्यमशेषेण कृतं ते राम दुष्करम्। बहुवर्षसहस्राणि मानुषं देहमाश्रितः।। 34।।
कुर्वन्दुष्करकर्माणि लोकद्वयहिताय च। पापहारीणि भुवनं यशसा पूरयिष्यसि।। 35।।

tvaṃ brahmaṇā purā bhūmerbhārahārāya rāghava /
prārthitastapasā tuṣṭastvaṃ jāto'si raghoḥ kule //
devakāryamaśeṣeṇa kṛtaṃ te rāma duṣkaram /
bahuvarṣasahasrāṇi mānuṣaṃ dehamāśritaḥ //
kurvanduṣkarakarmāṇi lokadvayahitāya ca /
pāpahārīṇi bhuvanaṃ yaśasā pūrayiṣyasi //

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! In an earlier time, Lord Brahma had prayed to you to remove the burden of this world. You were pleased by his severe and sincere penances and austerities, and to fulfill his wishes, have taken birth in the clan of king Raghu (as Sri Ram) (33).

Oh Sri Ram! You have completed all the works of the Gods that were most formidable and difficult to do. Now, you will live in the body of a human being for many thousands of years (34).

In this elegant form (as a human) you shall do many difficult, daunting and formidable tasks that will further destroy and eliminate all the remaining sins, vices, evils, perversions and such other negative traits and tendencies of the two worlds (the present and the future worlds) for their benefit and welfare. This will result in spreading and establishing your magnificent, majestic and immaculate fame and glory eternally in the whole world (35).

[Note—It is to be noted that sage Bharadwaj refers to certain deeds that the Lord would do in future that would further establish his glories in the world besides spreading the message of righteousness and goodness. This is a continuous process, and the later incarnations of the Lord in various forms as prophets and saints, sages and seers, philosophers and moral guides should be seen in their broader perspective. All came to establish Dharma, and all are to be regarded as manifestations of the same and immutable supreme Lord who comes from time to time to look after his flock of wayward children when they go out of his hands; he comes to discipline them, goes back after disciplining one generation and leaving behind a legacy for the future generations, but as is the wont of

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Kaal, things go out of spin once again after a certain break, and then the Lord has to suffer again and come again.]

प्रार्थयामि जगन्नाथ पवित्रं कुरु मे गृहम्। स्थित्वाद्य भुक्त्वा सबलः श्वो गमिष्यसि पत्तनम्।। 36।।
तथेति राघवोऽतिष्ठत्तस्मिन्नाश्रम उत्तमे। ससैन्यः पूजितस्तेन सीतया लक्ष्मणेन च।। 37।।

prārthayāmi jagannātha pavitraṃ kuru me gṛham/
sthitvādya bhuktvā sabalaḥ śvo gamiṣyasi pattanam//
tatheti rāghavo'tiṣṭhattasminnāśrama uttame/
sasainyaḥ pūjitastena sītayā lakṣmaṇena ca//

Oh the Lord of the world! It is my prayer (request) that you make a stop over here (in my hermitage) with your army, have your meals here, and thereby purify my hermitage. Then you can proceed to your capital tomorrow (36).

Then Raghav (Sri Ram) replied 'alright' and accepted his invitation, and stayed there along with his army, Sita and Laxman, after being duly welcomed, honoured and worshipped by the sage (Bharadwaj) (37).

ततो रामश्चिन्तयित्वा मुहूर्तं प्राह मारुतिम्। इतो गच्छ हनूमंस्त्वमयोध्यां प्रति सत्वरः।। 38।।
जानीहि कुशली कश्चिज्जनो नृपतिमन्दिरे। शृङ्गवेरपुरं गत्वा ब्रूहि मित्रं गुहं मम।। 39।।

tato rāmaścintayitvā muhūrtaṃ prāha mārutim/
ito gaccha hanūmaṃstvamayodhyāṃ prati satvaraḥ//
jānīhi kuśalī kaścijjano nṛpatimandire/
śṛṅgaverapuraṃ gatvā brūhi mitraṃ guhaṃ mama//

Sri Ram thought for a Muhurt (i.e. for a short time; technically, 1 hour and 48 minutes) and then said to Maruti, 'Oh Hanuman! You go to Ayodhya soon from here (38). Find out if everything is all right in the royal household. Go to Sringverpur and talk with my friend Guha (39).

जानकीलक्ष्मणोपेतमागतं मां निवेदय। नन्दिग्रामं ततो गत्वा भ्रातरं भरतं मम।। 40।।
दृष्ट्वा ब्रूहि सभार्यस्य सभ्रातुः कुशलं मम। सीतापहरणादीनि रावणस्य वधादिकम्।। 41।।

jānakīlakṣmaṇopetamāgataṃ māṃ nivedaya/
nandigrāmaṃ tato gatvā bhrātaraṃ bharataṃ mama//
dṛṣṭvā brūhi sabhāryasya sabhrātuḥ kuśalaṃ mama/
sītāpaharaṇādīni rāvaṇasya vadhādikam//

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Inform him (Guha) about my arrival along with Janki (Sita) and Laxman. After that, go to Nandigram and meet my brother Bharat (40) and tell him about my well-being along with that of my wife and brother. Tell him about all the events extending from the abduction of Sita up to the slaying of Ravana and other such details. (41).

ब्रूहि क्रमेण मे भ्रातुः सर्वं तत्र विचेष्टितम्। हत्वा शत्रुगणान्सर्वान्सभार्यः सहलक्ष्मणः।। 42।।
उपयाति समृद्धार्थः सह ऋक्षहरीश्वरैः। इत्युक्त्वा तत्र वृत्तान्तं भरतस्य विचेष्टितम्।। 43।।
सर्वं ज्ञात्वा पुनः शीघ्रमागच्छ मम सन्निधिम्। तथेति हनुमांस्तत्र मानुषं वपुरास्थितः।। 44।।
नन्दिग्रामं ययौ तूर्णं वायुवेगेन मारुतिः। गरुत्मानिव वेगेन जिघृक्षन् भुजगोत्तमम्।। 45।।

brūhi krameṇa me bhrātuḥ sarvaṃ tatra viceṣṭitam /
hatvā śatruganānsarvānsabhāryaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ //
upayāti samṛddhārthaḥ saha ṛkṣaharīśvaraiḥ /
ityuktvā tatra vṛttāntaṃ bharatasya viceṣṭitam //
sarvaṃ jñātvā punaḥ śīghramāgaccha mama sannidhim /
tatheti hanumāṃstatra mānuṣaṃ vapurāsthitaḥ //
nandigrāmaṃ yayau tūrṇaṃ vāyuvegeṇa mārutiḥ /
garutmāniva vegena jighṛkṣan bhujagottamam //

Tell my brother (Bharat) everything in chronological order and tell him that having successfully killed (i.e. vanquished) all his enemies, Sri Ram is coming here with his wife (Sita), Laxman, bears and monkeys. Tell him all this and find out his response (i.e. intentions, and see how he reacts to the news of my arrival). After that, come back to me here soon'. Then Hanuman said 'alright' and assumed a human form (42-44). He proceeded to Nandigram with the speed of wind (i.e. very swiftly and in great haste)[1]. At that time, Maruti (Hanuman) resembled Garuda (the eagle—the mount of Vishnu) who was swooping down from the sky to catch hold of a snake (i.e. he literally flew and swooped down on Ayodhya like a diving eagle or heron zooming down on its prey) (45).

[Note :—[1]Here, Hanuman had assumed a human form, probably of a Brahmin, so the phrase 'with the speed of wind' does not mean that he actually flew like a bird in the sky. It means that he went on the errand with the speed of wind, as fast as he could go, without wasting any time, appearing to be flying in the air because of his great speed that mimicked the speed of wind; that is, very swiftly and with agility.

But at the same time it must be remembered that we are dealing with a

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period in ancient time which is beyond our imagination and conception. At that time there must have been many things and technologies about which we are not aware of as yet, but that does not mean that they are figments of imagination. For example, in our modern world, even about 30-40 years ago, no one could have imagined of the computer and other so many technological advances that have taken place and have become an integral part of our daily lives today. Suppose a man was born and writing some narration about a century back, he couldn't possibly have mentioned anything of what we know of today, but may be he knew of certain things that were contemporary to him and had he not written about them, we wouldn't have any knowledge about it today, though that thing or technology have become extinct or obsolete. So, in short, it is possible that in those times there existed some personal flying technology, like a strap-on rocket or flying belt that enabled the person to fly short distances much like a chopper of today. And even as all people do not access to such facilities even today, it is mighty possible that Hanuman was a member of an elite group who possessed these facilities for their use.]

श्रृङ्गवेरपुरं प्राप्य गुहमासाद्य मारुतिः। उवाच मधुरं वाक्यं प्रहृष्टेनान्तरात्मना।।46।।
रामो दाशरथिः श्रीमान्सखा ते सह सीतया। सलक्ष्मणस्त्वां धर्मात्मा क्षेमी कुशलमब्रवीत्।।47।।
अनुज्ञातोऽद्य मुनिना भरद्वाजेन राघवः। आगमिष्यति तं देवं द्रक्ष्यसि त्वं रघूत्तमम्।।48।।

śṛṅgaverapuraṃ prāpya guhamāsādya mārutiḥ/
uvāca madhuraṃ vākyaṃ prahṛṣṭenāntarātmanā//
rāmo dāśarathiḥ śrīmānsakhā te saha sītayā/
salakṣmaṇastvāṃ dharmātmā kṣemī kuśalamabravīt//
anujñāto'dya muninā bharadvājena rāghavaḥ/
āgamiṣyati taṃ devaṃ drakṣyasi tvaṃ raghūttamam//

When he reached Sringverpur, Maruti (Hanuman) went to Guha and said most cheerfully with a friendly and sweet voice (46), 'Oh gentleman! Your friend Sri Ram, the son of Dashrath, who is the most righteous and noble as well as a protector and provider of happiness to all, has conveyed his own well-being, along with that of Sita and Laxman, to you (47). Today Raghav (Sri Ram) will take permission from sage Bharadwaj and come here to meet you. Then you shall have the privilege to have a Darshan (divine viewing) of the most exalted Raghu' (48).

एवमुक्त्वा महातेजाः सम्प्रहृष्टतनूरुहम्। उत्पपात महावेगो वायुवेगेन मारुतिः।।49।।
सोऽपश्यद्गामतीर्थं च सरयूं च महानदीम्। तामतिक्रम्य हनुमान्नन्दिग्रामं ययौ मुदा।।50।।

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evamuktvā mahātejāḥ samprahṛṣṭatanūruham /
utpapāta mahāvego vāyuvegena mārutiḥ //
so'paśyadrāmatīrthaṃ ca sarayūṃ ca mahānadīm /
tāmatikramya hanūmānnandigrāmaṃ yayau mudā //

Having said this to Guha who was thrilled with this pleasant and exhilarating news, the most glorious and radiant Maruti (Hanuman) proceeded further ahead with the speed of wind in the sky (49). After some time, he sighted the 'Ram Tirtha' (literally, a pilgrim site associated with Sri Ram. Here it means the holy city of Ayodhya) and the great river Saryu. He crossed it and proceeded to Nandigram with a most cheerful mind (50).

क्रोशमात्रे त्वयोध्यायाश्चीरकृष्णाजिनाम्बरम्। ददर्श भरतं दीनं कृशमाश्रमवासिनम्।। 51।।
मलपङ्कविदिग्धाङ्गं जटिलं वल्कलाम्बरम्। फलमूलकृताहारं रामचिन्तापरायणम्।। 52।।
पादुके ते पुरस्कृत्य शासयन्तं वसुन्धराम्। मन्त्रिभिः पौरमुख्यैश्च काषायाम्बरधारिभिः।। 53।।
वृतदेहं मूर्तिमन्तं साक्षाद्धर्ममिव स्थितम्। उवाच प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यं हनूमान्मारुतात्मजः।। 54।।

krośamātre tvayodhyāyāścīrakṛṣṇājināmbaram /
dadarśa bharataṃ dīnaṃ kṛśamāśramavāsinam //
malapaṅkavidigdhāṅgaṃ jaṭilaṃ valkalāmbaram /
phalamūlakṛtāhāraṃ rāmacintāparāyaṇam //
pāduke te puraskṛtya śāsayantaṃ vasundharām /
mantribhiḥ pauramukhyaiśca kāṣāyāmbaradhāribhiḥ //
vṛtadehaṃ mūrtimantaṃ sākṣāddharmamiva sthitam /
uvāca prāñjalirvākyaṃ hanūmānmārutātmajaḥ //

At a distance of appx. 1 Kosa (roughly 2 miles) from Ayodhya, he saw Bharat attired in clothes made from birch and wearing a dark deer skin. He was very distressed, miserable, lean and emaciated while living in that hermitage (at Nandigram) (51). He had smeared ash on his body, had matted hairs on his head, wore clothes made of bark of trees, ate (and survived on) fruits and edible roots, and was constantly thinking of Sri Ram (52). He kept the two sandals (of Sri Ram) most reverentially and with great honour in the front, and ruled over the land (on Sri Ram's behalf). [That is, he presided over the functioning and day to day administration of the kingdom on behalf of Sri Ram, only as a caretaker and not as the de-facto king. Placing Sri Ram's footwear on the throne was a symbolic gesture to clearly indicate as to who was the real king.] He was surrounded by ministers wearing

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ochre clothes as well as other chief citizens of the city (53). He appeared Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble and virtuous conduct) personified. Seeing him in this state, the son of the Wind God, Hanuman, stood with hands bent at the elbow and palms joined together in submission and reverence. He said (54)—

[Note :—The above description of Bharat shows that he had led a very austere and humble life full of hardships during the 14 years of the exile period of Sri Ram though he was a caretaker prince and could have enjoyed all the comforts that come with kingship, without having any raised eyebrows. But that wouldn't have made Bharat immortal, famous and glorious in the annals of history, legend and folklore.]

यं त्वं चिन्तयसे रामं तापसं दण्डके स्थितम्। अनुशोचसि काकुत्स्थः स त्वां कुशलमब्रवीत्।। 55।।
प्रियमाख्यामि ते देव शोकं त्यज सुदारुणम्। अस्मिन्मुहूर्त्ते भ्रात्रा त्वं रामेण सह सङ्गतः।।56।।
समरे रावणं हत्वा रामः सीतामवाप्य च। उपयाति समृद्धार्थः ससीतः सहलक्ष्मणः।। 57।।

yaṃ tvaṃ cintayase rāmaṃ tāpasaṃ daṇḍake sthitam /
anuśocasi kākutsthaḥ sa tvāṃ kuśalamabravīt //
priyamākhyāmi te deva śokaṃ tyaja sudāruṇam /
asminmuhūrte bhrātrā tvaṃ rāmeṇa saha saṅgataḥ //
samare rāvaṇaṃ hatvā rāmaḥ sītāmavāpya ca /
upayāti samṛddhārthaḥ sasītaḥ sahalakṣmaṇaḥ //

(Hanuman said to Bharat—) 'Sri Ram, whose image as a resident hermit of Dandakaranya forest is being constantly remembered by you, for whom you have suffered so much hardship, mental agonies, regret, contrition and remorse, and who is a son in the clan of Kukustha, has sent the word of his welfare and well-being to you (55).

Oh Lord, leave this greatly melancholic, despondent, contrite, sorrowful and remorseful mood. I shall tell you very pleasing news. You shall meet your (beloved) brother Sri Ram during this Muhurt itself (i.e. within the next 1 hour 48 minutes to be precise, but generally speaking, it means in a very short time) (56). Sri Ram has killed Ravana in the war, has retrieved Sita back from his clutches, and being successful in his endeavours (of fulfilling the words of his father to stay in exile for 14 years), he is coming back with Sita and Laxman' (57).

एवमुक्तो महातेजा भरतो हर्षमूर्च्छितः। पपात भुवि चास्वस्थः कैकयीप्रियनन्दनः।। 58।।
आलिङ्ग्य भरतः शीघ्रं मारुतिं प्रियवादिनम्। आनन्दजैरश्रुजलैः सिषेच भरतः कपिम्।।59।।

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evamukto mahātejā bharato harṣamūrcchitaḥ /
papāta bhuvi cāsvasthaḥ kaikayīpriyanandanaḥ //
āliṅgya bharataḥ śīghraṃ mārutiṃ priyavādinam /
ānandajairaśrujalaiḥ siṣeca bharataḥ kapim //

When he (Hanuman) had said so, the most glorious and radiant Bharat who was the dear son of Kaikeyi, became so ecstatic and overcome with joy that he became unconscious and fell to the ground (58). (When he had recovered himself, he stood up and) Then he soon embraced Maruti (Hanuman) who had said these most pleasing and endearing words to him, and drenched him with tears of extreme delight and unbound joy (59).

देवो वा मानुषो वा त्वमनुक्रोशादिहागतः। प्रियाख्यानस्य ते सौम्य ददामि ब्रुवतः प्रियम्।। 60।।
गवां शतसहस्रं च ग्रामाणां च शतं वरम्। सर्वाभरणसम्पन्ना मुग्धाः कन्यास्तु षोडश।।61।।

devo vā mānuṣo vā tvamanukrośādihāgataḥ /
priyākhyānasya te saumya dadāmi bruvataḥ priyam //
gavāṃ śatasahasraṃ ca grāmāṇāṃ ca śataṃ varam /
sarvābharaṇasampannā mugdhāḥ kanyāstu ṣoḍaśa //

(Bharat said—) 'Are you some God or an ordinary man who has shown his grace upon me by coming here? Oh the polite, courteous, gentle and pleasant one! In return for the most welcome, endearing and pleasing news which you have conveyed to me (60), I am giving you (i.e. gifting you as a reward) 1 lakh (100 thousand) cows, 1 hundred good villages, and 16 beautiful maidens fully decorated with all possible ornaments' (61).

एवमुक्त्वा पुनः प्राह भरतो मारुतात्मजम्। बहुनीमानि वर्षाणि गतस्य सुमहद्वनम्।। 62।।
श्रृणोम्यहं प्रीतिकरं मम नाथस्य कीर्तनम्। कल्याणी बत गाथेयं लौकिकी प्रतिभाति मे।।63।।
एति जीवन्तमानन्दो नरं वर्षशतादपि। राघवस्य हरीणां च कथमासीत्समागमः।। 64।।

evamuktvā punaḥ prāha bharato mārutātmajam /
bahūnīmāni varṣāṇi gatasya sumahadvanam //
śṛṇomyahaṃ prītikaraṃ mama nāthasya kīrtanam /
kalyāṇī bata gātheyaṃ laukikī pratibhāti me //
eti jīvantamānando naraṃ varṣaśatādapi /
rāghavasya harīṇāṃ ca kathamāsītsamāgamaḥ //

Saying this, Bharat paused for a moment and once again said to the son of the Wind God (Hanuman), 'After so many long years since

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he had gone to the formidable, wild forest (62), I have at last heard the good news of my dearest Lord whom I have been constantly remembering for all this long while. Today it appears to me that the popular adage providing hope and light to those in despair, feeling hapless and helpless due to unfavourable circumstances (63), that 'if one stays alive, then there are chances that he might get happiness even in a hundred years'[1], is true. Tell me how did Raghav (Sri Ram) come in contact with and befriended the monkeys? (64).

[Note—[1]It implies that under unfavourable conditions, a man must keep his faith and hopes alive and never think of ending his life, because all times are not the same, and some day or the other good times would definitely come. But if one dies, then he would never have the chance of seeing those good times once again by any chance.]

तत्त्वमाख्याहि भद्रं ते विश्वसेयं वचस्तव। एवमुक्तोऽथ हनुमान् भरतेन महात्मना।। 65।।
आचचक्षेऽथ रामस्य चरितं कृत्स्नशः क्रमात्। श्रुत्वा तु परमानन्दं भरतो मारुतात्मजात्।।66।।

tattvamākhyāhi bhadraṃ te viśvaseyaṃ vacastava /
evamukto'tha hanumān bharatena mahātmanā //
ācacakṣe'tha rāmasya caritaṃ kṛtsnaśaḥ kramāt /
śrutvā tu paramānandaṃ bharato mārutātmajāt //

Gentleman, you be blessed! Tell me the truth so that I can believe your words'. When the noble and great Bharat said so, Hanuman narrated to him the entire story of Sri Ram in a chronological order. Hearing this narration from the son of the Wind God (Hanuman), Bharat felt extremely exhilarant and glad (65-66).

आज्ञापयच्छत्रुहणं मुदा युक्तं मुदान्वितः। दैवतानि च यावन्ति नगरे रघुनन्दन।। 67।।
नानोपहारबलिभिः पूजयन्तु महाधियः। सूता वैतालिकाश्चैव वन्दिनः स्तुतिपाठकाः।।68।।
वारमुख्याश्च शतशो निर्यान्त्वद्यैव सङ्घशः। राजदारास्तथामात्याः सेना हस्त्यश्वपत्तयः।।69।।
ब्राह्मणाश्च तथा पौरा राजानो ये समागताः। निर्यान्तु राघवस्याद्य द्रष्टुं शशिनिभाननम्।।70।।

ājñāpayacchatruhaṇaṃ mudā yuktaṃ mudānvitaḥ /
daivatāni ca yāvanti nagare raghunandana //
nānopahārabalibhiḥ pūjayantu mahādhiyaḥ /
sūtā vaitālikāścaiva bandinaḥ stutipāṭhakāḥ //
vāramukhyāśca śataśo niryāntvadyaiva saṅghaśaḥ /
rājadārāstathāmātyāḥ senā hastyaśvapattayaḥ //
brahmaṇāśca tathā paurā rājāno ye samāgatāḥ /
niryāntu rāghavasyādya draṣṭuṃ śaśinibhānanam //

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He (Bharat) cheerfully ordered the delighted Shatrughan, 'Oh Raghunandan! Let the wise Pandits (expert Brahmins) worship all the Gods and patron deities of the city with different types and varieties of offerings and make sacrifices to them. Suts (professional singers), Vaitaliks (those minstrels who wake up the king early morning by singing devotional hymns), Bandijans (royal bards who chant hymns) (67-68) and chief Varangnayas (professional royal courtesans) should come out of the city in groups of hundreds (i.e. in large multitudes) and assemble at the gate of the city to welcome Sri Ram. Besides them, royal household womenfolk, ministers, the three wings of the army consisting of elephants, horses and foot soldiers (69), Brahmins, citizens and all other kings, knights and subordinate rulers/vassals who are present here at the moment should also come out of the city to have a glimpse of the moon-like (i.e. attractive, charming, soothing, most sought after, pleasing, pleasantly welcome and auspicious looking) face of Raghav (Sri Ram)' (70).

भरतस्य वचः श्रुत्वा शत्रुघ्नपरिचोदिताः। अलञ्चक्रुश्च नगरीं मुक्तारत्नमयोज्ज्वलैः॥ 71॥
तोरणैश्च पताकाभिर्विचित्राभिरनेकधा। अलङ्कुर्वन्ति वेश्मानि नानाबलिविचक्षणाः॥ 72॥

bharatasya vacaḥ śrutvā śatrughnaparicoditāḥ /
alañcakruśca nagarīṃ muktāratnamayojjvalaiḥ //
toraṇaiśca patākābhirvicitrābhiranekadhā /
alaṅkurvanti veśmāni nānābalivicakṣaṇāḥ //

Hearing the words of Bharat and at the inspiration (i.e. green signal to go ahead) from Shatrughan, all the denizens of the city who were experts in beautification and organizing decorations, festivities and celebrations of various kinds got down to their task in right earnest and decked up the city elegantly with festoons and buntings studded with bright pearls and jewels and gems, as well as in colourful varieties of flags and banners of myriad kinds. These decorations made the city look very festive and most magnificent to behold (71-72).

निर्यान्ति वृन्दशः सर्वे रामदर्शनलालसाः। हयानां शतसाहस्रं गजानामयुतं तथा॥ 73॥
रथानां दशसाहस्रं स्वर्णसूत्रविभूषितम्। पारमेष्ठीन्युपादाय द्रव्याण्युच्चावचानि च॥ 74॥

niryānti vṛndaśaḥ sarve rāmadarśanalālasāḥ /
hayānāṃ śatasāhasraṃ gajānāmayutaṃ tathā //
rathānāṃ daśasāhasraṃ svarṇasūtravibhūṣitam /
pārameṣṭhinyupādāya dravyāṇyuccāvacāni ca ///

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Then all the people began coming out of the city and assembling on its outskirts in hordes with a desire to have a Darshan of (i.e. privileged view and the honour to see) Sri Ram. They brought (i.e. took along with them when they assembled) one lakh (100 thousand) horses, ten thousand elephants and equal number of chariots decorated with golden reins and harnesses and many other symbols of well-being, prosperity, pomp, circumstance, grandeur and majesty indicating a flourishing and prosperous city which has come out to welcome its monarch with a warm heart and bubbling enthusiasm (73-74).

[Note :—The people turned up in all their best of finery and symbol of welfare and happiness to welcome Sri Ram. This was not done to show off their wealth—it is absurd, incredulous and incongruous to think so because Sri Ram was their Lord and King. He was not an outsider king who needed to be impressed by the wealth and prosperity of the city and its inhabitants. It was a token or a symbolic gesture to tell Sri Ram that the city was well-off and did not have to suffer any calamitous event during the period of his absence, and that everything was fine and well taken care of. Sri Ram must have been worried about Ayodhya, its people and how they had fared under Bharat. By seeing all those signs from high up in the sky from his Pushpak plane in which he was arriving, these signs of prosperity, jubilation and an open-arm ceremonial welcome must have been most reassuring for Sri Ram. It was necessary to do this—because Bharat feared that any hint to the contrary might make Sri Ram change his mind at the last moment, and he might not land in the city at all but go back from the sky itself to some other destination of his choice if he thought that he was not welcome in Ayodhya. That would have been most disastrous for the kingdom.]

ततस्तु शिबिकारूढा निर्ययू राजयोषितः। भरतः पादुके न्यस्य शिरस्येव कृताञ्जलिः।। 75।।
शत्रुघ्नसहितो रामं पादचारेण निर्ययौ। तदैव दृश्यते दूराद्विमानं चन्द्रसन्निभम्।। 76।।
पुष्पकं सूर्यसङ्काशं मनसा ब्रह्मनिर्मितम्। एतस्मिन् भ्रातरौ वीरो वैदेह्या रामलक्ष्मणौ।। 77।।
सुग्रीवश्च कपिश्रेष्ठो मन्त्रिभिश्च विभीषणः। दृश्यते पश्यत जना इत्याह पवनात्मजः।। 78।।

tatastu śibikārūḍhā niryayū rājayoṣitaḥ /
bharataḥ pāduke nyasya śirasyeva kṛtāñjaliḥ //
śatrughnasahito rāmaṃ pādacāreṇa niryayau /
tadaiva dṛśyate dūrādvimānaṃ candrasannibham //
puṣpakaṃ sūryasaṅkāśaṃ manasā brahmanirmitam /
etasmin bhrātarau vīrau vaidehyā rāmalakṣmaṇau //

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sugrīvaśca kapiśreṣṭho mantribhiśca vibhīṣaṇaḥ /
dṛśyate paśyata janā etyāha pavanātmajaḥ //

Behind them went the women of the royal household on palanquins (shoulder carried carriage) followed by Bharat with Sri Ram's sandals placed on his head and hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together in humility and prayerful mode (75). He was accompanied by Shatrughan. They went barefoot to meet and welcome Sri Ram. Just about that time, from far away and shining like a full moon (76), the Pushpak plane was sighted (in the sky) like the dazzling splendour of the sun. It was the brainchild of Brahma, the creator.

Seeing it, the son of the Wind God (Hanuman) said, 'Oh look! The two brave brothers Sri Ram and Laxman along with Vaidehi (Sita), Sugriv, who is the best among the monkeys, and Vibhishan along with his ministers, are seen aboard that plane' (77-78).

ततो हर्षसमुद्भूतो निःस्वनो दिवमस्पृशत्। स्त्रीबालयुववृद्धानां रामोऽयमिति कीर्तनात्।। 79।।
रथकुञ्जरवाजिस्था अवतीर्य महीं गताः। ददृशुस्ते विमानस्थं जनाः सोममिवाम्बरे।। 80।।

tato harṣasamudbhūto niḥsvano divamaspṛśat /
strībālayuvavṛddhānāṃ rāmo'yamiti kīrtanāt //
rathakuñjaravādisthā avatīrya mahīṃ gatāḥ /
dadṛśuste vimānasthaṃ janāḥ somamivāmbare //

Then there was such a jubilant, thunderous outburst of spontaneous and excited chorus of 'this is indeed Sri Ram' from all the assembled women, children, youths and aged ones of the city that the sky reverberated with the tumultuous exclaim and euphoric applause (79). Those who were astride chariots, elephants and horses got down and stood on the ground. All of them watched him (Sri Ram) seated in the plane as if they were watching the full Moon in the sky, gaping awestruck and enthralled (80).

[Note :—Verse nos. 67-80 deal with the welcoming arrangement for Sri Ram on the fields outside the gates of the city of Ayodhya.]

प्राञ्जलिर्भरतो भूत्वा प्रहृष्टो राघवोन्मुखः। ततो विमानाग्रगतं भरतो राघवं मुदा।। 81।।
ववन्दे प्रणतो रामं मेरुस्थमिव भास्करम्। ततो रामाभ्यनुज्ञातं विमानमपतद्भुवि।। 82।।

prāñjalirbharato bhūtvā prahṛṣṭo rāghavonmukhaḥ /
tato vimānāgragataṃ bharato rāghavaṃ mudā //
vavande praṇato rāmaṃ merusthamiva bhāskaram /
tato rāmābhyanujñātaṃ vimānamapatadbhuvi //

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Then Bharat faced (i.e. looked up at) Raghav (Sri Ram) sitting in the plane, and with an exhilarant and cheerful heart, he bowed to the latter with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as if paying his obeisance to the rising Sun on the Sumeru mountain. When Sri Ram observed all this development from the sky, he ordered the plane to land on the ground (81-82).

[Note :—If we refer to verse no. 44 in which Sri Ram had instructed Hanuman to find out how Bharat responds to the news of his arrival, the meaning of verse nos. 81-82 will fall into place. Sri Ram stayed up in the sky till the moment Bharat showed physical signs—bowing with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as if paying his obeisance—of welcome. For, if there would have been any hint to the contrary, Sri Ram would have turned away from the sky itself. See note to verse nos. 73-74. Further, it must be noted that though Sri Ram had instructed Hanuman to quickly come back with the news of developments at Ayodhya, the latter was still on the ground with Bharat as is evident from verse nos. 77-78. Perhaps Sri Ram was himself so eager and anxious to meet Bharat and the citizens of Ayodhya that he could not wait till the time Hanuman went back to him at Bharadwaj's hermitage.]

आरोपितो विमानं तद्भरतः सानुजस्तदा। राममासाद्य मुदितः पुनरेवाभ्यवादयत्।। 83।।
समुत्थाप्य चिराद्दृष्टं भरतं रघुनन्दनः। भ्रातरं स्वाङ्कमारोप्य मुदा तं परिषस्वजे।। 84।।

āropitā vimānaṃ tadbharataḥ sānujastadā/
rāmamāsādya muditaḥ punarevābhyavādayat//
samutthāya cirāddṛṣṭaṃ bharataṃ raghunandanaḥ/
bhrātaraṃ svāṅkamāropya mudā taṃ pariṣasvaje//

Thence, Sri Ram picked up Bharat along with his younger brother (Shatrughan) on to the plane. Once near Sri Ram, Bharat once again bowed reverentially before him (83).

Seeing Bharat after a long time, Raghunandan (Sri Ram) picked him up in his arms most cheerfully, and affectionately clasped him to his bosom to show his love for him (84).

ततो लक्ष्मणमासाद्य वैदेहीं नाम कीर्तयन्। अभ्यवादयत प्रीतो भरतः प्रेमविह्वलः।। 85।।
सुग्रीवं जाम्बवन्तं च युवराजं तथाङ्गदम्। मैन्दद्विविदनीलांश्च ऋषभं चैव सस्वजे।। 86।।
सुषेणं च नलं चैव गवाक्षं गन्धमादनम्। शरभं पनसं चैव भरतः परिषस्वजे।। 87।।

tato lakṣmaṇamāsādya vaidehīṃ nāma kīrtayan/
abhyavādayata prīto bharataḥ premavihvalaḥ//
sugrīvaṃ jāmbavantaṃ ca yuvarājaṃ tathāṅgadam/
maindadvividanīlāṃśca ṛṣabhaṃ caiva sasvaje//

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suṣeṇaṃ ca nalaṃ caiva gavākṣaṃ gandhamādanam /
śarabhaṃ panasaṃ caiva bharataḥ pariṣasvaje //

Then Bharat— who was overcome and overwhelmed with surging emotions of love, endearment and affection associated with reunion with those who were dearest to his heart—met Laxman, and then bowed affectionately before Sita and announced his name (85). After that, Bharat embraced all those who had come with Sri Ram on the plane, such as Sugriv, Jamvant, prince Angad, Maind, Dwivid, Neel, Rishav (86), Sushen, Nal, Gawaksha, Gandhamadan, Sharabh and Panas (87).

[Note :—This fact that Bharat had to announce to Sita who he was shows that she was not looking directly at him. More than Sri Ram, it was she who had to suffer such a lot because of him. She also did not look at him because it was an honoured tradition amongst the higher echelons of noble society that chaste ladies kept their eyes low in public. Being surrounded by tens of thousands of eager eyes riveted on the couple, Sita was feeling very shy and bashful under the glare. She was also reluctant and uncertain about Bharat's internal mind set-up—whether he really welcomed them or was he just pretending to be courteous outwardly while being sly, scheming, inimical and mischievous internally. After all, if even Sri Ram was suspicious and wanted to be certain about Bharat's integrity and real intentions—as is very obvious from the fact that he invited Bharat on the plane instead of stepping down from it on the ground, and earlier when he had asked sage Bharadwaj about any news of Bharat, and had clearly asked Hanuman to find out his thoughts—then she was after all Bharat's sister-in-law!]

सर्वे ते मानुषं रूपं कृत्वा भरतमादृताः। पप्रच्छुः कुशलं सौम्याः प्रहृष्टाश्च प्लवङ्गमाः॥88॥
ततः सुग्रीवमालिङ्ग्य भरतः प्राह भक्तितः। त्वत्सहायेन रामस्य जयोऽभूद्रावणो हतः॥89॥

sarve te mānuṣaṃ rūpaṃ kṛtvā bharatamādṛtāḥ /
papracchuḥ kuśalaṃ saumyāḥ prahṛṣṭāśca plavaṅgamāḥ //
tataḥ sugrīvamāliṅgya bharataḥ prāha bhaktitaḥ /
tvatsahāyena rāmasya jayo'bhūdrāvaṇo hataḥ //

All the monkeys had assumed a gentlemanly human form[1]. When they were duly honoured and welcomed by Bharat, they asked about his welfare (88). Then Bharat embraced Sugriv once again and said to him most thankfully, gratefully and affectionately, 'It is because of

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your help that Sri Ram has attained victory (in the war) and Ravana has been slayed (89).

त्वमस्माकं चतुर्णां तु भ्राता सुग्रीव पञ्चमः। शत्रुघ्नश्च तदा राममभिवाद्य सलक्ष्मणम्।। 90।।
सीतायाश्चरणौ पश्चाद्ववन्दे विनयान्वितः। रामो मातरमासाद्य विवर्णां शोकविह्वलाम्।।91।।
जग्राह प्रणतः पादौ मनो मातुः प्रसादयन्। कैकेयीं च सुमित्रां च ननामेतरमातरौ।। 92।।

tvamasmākaṃ caturṇāṃ tu bhrātā sugrīva pañcamaḥ/
śatrughnaśca tadā rāmamabhivādya salakṣmaṇam//
sītāyāścaraṇau paścādvavande vinayānvitaḥ/
rāmo mātaramāsādya vivarṇāṃ śokavihvalām//
jagrāha praṇataḥ pādau mano mātuḥ prasādayan/
kaikeyīṃ ca sumitrāṃ ca nanāmetaramātarau//

Hence, you are like the fifth brother for the four of us'. After that, Shatrughan bowed before Sri Ram and Laxman (90) and then paid his homage with the greatest of humility and politeness at the feet of Sita. Then Sri Ram went to mother Kaushalya who was very weak, emaciated and confounded due to prolonged sorrows, anguish and distress (91). He touched her feet with great humility and politeness which pleased her heart (i.e. provided comfort to her tormented heart and mind). He also bowed before his step mothers Kaikeyi and Sumitra (92).

भरतः पादुके ते तु राघवस्य सुपूजिते। योजयामास रामस्य पादयोर्भक्तिसंयुतः।। 93।।
राज्यमेतन्न्यासभूतं मया निर्यातितं तव। अद्य मे सफलं जन्म फलितो मे मनोरथः।। 94।।
यत्पश्यामि समायातमयोध्यां त्वामहं प्रभो। कोष्ठागारं बलं कोशं कृतं दशगुणं मया।। 95।।

bharataḥ pāduke te tu rāghavasya supūjite/
yojayāmāsa rāmasya pādayorbhaktisaṃyutaḥ//
rājyametannyāsabhūtaṃ mayā niryātitaṃ tava/
adya me saphalaṃ janma phalito me manorathaḥ//
yatpaśyāmi samāyātamayodhyāṃ tvāmahaṃ prabho/
koṣṭhāgāraṃ balaṃ kośaṃ kṛtaṃ daśaguṇaṃ mayā//

After that, Bharat returned those sandals which had been duly worshipped by him (all along these 14 years of exile) back to Sri Ram with the greatest of devotion, respect, honour and humility, and put them back on his feet (93).

(Then Bharat submitted before Sri Ram—) 'I am handing back to

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you your kingdom which you had kept with me for safe keeping. I feel that my birth has been successful (i.e. fruitful, rewarded and useful), and all my desires and wishes have borne fruits (i.e. have also been rewarded by being fulfilled) (94). During your absence from Ayodhya, oh Lord, by your grace, glory and majesty, I have been able to increase by 10 times the stock of food grains, the army and the treasury (95).

त्वत्तेजसा जगन्नाथ पालयस्व पुरं स्वकम्। इति ब्रुवाणं भरतं दृष्ट्वा सर्वे कपीश्वराः।। 96।।
मुमुचुर्नेत्रजं तोयं प्रशशंसुर्मुदान्विताः। ततो रामः प्रहृष्टात्मा भरतं स्वाङ्कगं मुदा।। 97।।
ययौ तेन विमानेन भरतस्याश्रमं तदा। अवरुह्य तदा रामो विमानाग्र्यान्महीतलम्।। 98।।
अब्रवीत्पुष्पकं देवो गच्छ वैश्रवणं वह। अनुगच्छानुजानामि कुबेरं धनपालकम्।। 99।।

tvattejasā jagannātha pālayasva puraṃ svakam /
iti bruvāṇaṃ bharataṃ dṛṣṭvā sarve kapīśvarāḥ //
mumucurnetrajaṃ toyaṃ praśaśaṃsurmudānvitāḥ /
tato rāmaḥ prahṛṣṭātmā bharataṃ svāṅkagaṃ mudā //
yayau tena vimānena bharatasyāśramaṃ tadā /
avaruhya tadā rāmo vimānāgryānmahītalam //
abravītpuṣpakaṃ devo gaccha vaiśravaṇaṃ vaha /
anugaccḥānujānāmi kuberaṃ dhanapālakam //

Oh Lord of the world! Now take care of your city yourself (and relieve me of my responsibilities)'.

When the chief amongst the monkeys heard and saw Bharat say this (96), they praised him with tears of joy rolling down their eyes. Then Sri Ram most cheerfully and with a delighted heart seated Bharat on his lap (i.e. by his side) (97) and went to his hermitage (at Nandigram) in the plane. There, he got down from Pushpak which was the best amongst the aerial vehicles (98).

Then he said to Pushpak, 'Go, I order you, go back to Kuber, the patron God of wealth (literally, the caretaker or treasurer of the God's treasury) and become his vehicle and follow his instructions from now onwards (99).

[Note :—One just needs to close one's eyes and imagine the touching scene of that moment to properly enjoy the heart warming moments of reunion between two loving, affectionate and inseparable brothers whose affections for each other stood unscarred against the acid test of time imposed upon them by the merciless fate.]

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रामो वसिष्ठस्य गुरोः पदाम्बुजं नत्वा यथा देवगुरोः शतक्रतुः।
दत्त्वा महार्हासनमुत्तमं गुरोरूपाविवेशाथ गुरोः समीपतः।। 100।।

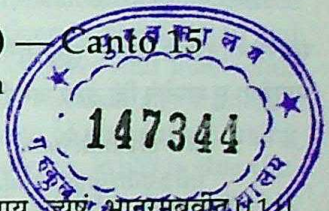
rāmo vasiṣṭhasya guroḥ padāmbujaṃ
natvā yathā devaguroḥ śatakratuḥ /
dattvā mahārhāsanamuttamaṃ guro-
rūpāviveśātha guroḥ samīpataḥ //

Sri Ram bowed his head at the lotus-like feet of his Guru Vashistha just like Indra does to the Guru of Gods (Brihaspati). He offered the Guru a most excellent and priceless seat (i.e. a seat reserved for senior moral preceptor of the clan, which was better than that reserved for the king himself), and himself sat besides him (100).

***

Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 15

Sri Ram's coronation



श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततस्तु कैकयीपुत्रो भरतो भक्तिसंयुतः। शिरस्यञ्जलिमाधाय ज्येष्ठं भ्रातरमब्रवीत्।। 1।।
माता मे सत्कृता राम दत्तं राज्यं त्वया मम। ददामि तत्ते च पुनर्यथा त्वमददा मम।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tatastu kaikayīputro bharato bhaktisaṃyutaḥ /
śirasyañjalimādhāya jyeṣṭhaṃ bhrātaramabravīt //
mātā me satkṛtā rāma dattaṃ rājyaṃ tvayā mama /
dadāmi tatte ca punaryathā tvamadadā mama //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Then Kaikeyi's son Bharat said submissively and most respectfully to his elder brother (Sri Ram) with a bowed head and hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer (1), 'Oh Sri Ram! By giving the reign of the kingdom to me, the word of my mother has been honoured (i.e. her wishes have been fulfilled) by you. Now, the way you had given it to me, I am giving it back to you' (2).

इत्युक्त्वा पादयोर्भक्त्या साष्टाङ्गं प्रणिपत्य च। बहुधा प्रार्थयामास कैकेय्या गुरुणा सह।। 3।।
तथेति प्रतिजग्राह भरताद्राज्यमीश्वरः। मायामाश्रित्य सकलां नरचेष्टामुपागतः।।4।।

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ityuktvā pādayorbhaktyā sāṣṭāṅgaṃ praṇipatya ca /
bahudhā prārthayāmāsa kaikeyyā guruṇā saha //
tatheti pratijagrāha bharatādrājyamīśvaraḥ /
māyāmāśritya sakalāṃ naraceṣṭāmupāgataḥ //

Saying this, he showed respects to Sri Ram by prostrating himself before his feet and pleaded before him (or requested him again and again), accompanied by Kaikeyi and his Guru (Vashistha), to accept the crown (3). Then, saying 'alright', he (Sri Ram) accepted the kingdom from Bharat in order to live up to the role of a human being, a form which he had willingly assumed using the medium (or tool) of his Maya (i.e. his deluding powers) (4).

[Note :—Verse no. 3 shows that Kaikeyi had joined her son to request Sri Ram to accept the crown, thereby formally removing any doubts and misgivings in his mind.]

स्वाराज्यानुभवो यस्य सुखज्ञानैकरूपिणः। निरस्तातिशयानन्दरूपिणः परमात्मनः।।5।।
मानुषेण तु राज्येन किं तस्य जगदीशितुः। यस्य भ्रूभङ्गमात्रेण त्रिलोकी नश्यति क्षणात्।।6।।

svārājyānubhavo yasya sukhajñānaikarūpiṇaḥ /
nirastātiśayānandarūpiṇaḥ paramātmanaḥ //
mānuṣeṇa tu rājyena kiṃ tasya jagadīśituḥ /
yasya bhrūbhaṅgamātreṇa trilokī naśyati kṣaṇāt //

He (Sri Ram as the supreme Brahm) enjoys the eternal kingdom of the heavens; he is the sole embodiment and image (i.e. he has no parallel or match) of spiritual comforts, well beings, happiness and joys as well as of enlightenment, wisdom and pure and truthful knowledge; he is free from (uninterested in) any desire or yearnings for pleasures pertaining to the sensual objects of the materialistic world and gratification of the sense organs; he is an embodiment and an image of supreme beatitude and felicity; he is the supreme Soul of the creation called Parmatma (the all-pervading, macrocosmic and transcendental Soul) (5), and is the Lord of the entire creation. Say, what does he have to do with (i.e. he is not bothered about) the wretched and humble kingdom belonging to this materialistic, illusionary, deceptive, perishable, humdrum human and mortal world? All the three worlds (heavens/celestial, terrestrial/mundane and subterranean/nether worlds) are destroyed in a fraction of a second by his mere malevolent glance (6).

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[Note—Compared to the glories of the kingdom of heaven and kingship of the entire creation, being a king of a limited geographical territory was literally a form of humiliation and demotion for the supreme Lord who rules over the whole universe. He has not accepted it because he was at all concerned with the enjoyments and comforts that would be incumbent with it, but because he had assumed a human form and had certain obligations to live up to.]

यस्यानुग्रहमात्रेण भवन्त्याखण्डलश्रियः। लीलासृष्टमहासृष्टेः कियदेतद्रमापतेः।। 7।।
तथापि भजतां नित्यं कामपूरविधित्सया। लीलामानुषदेहेन सर्वमप्यनुवर्तते।। 8।।

yasyānugrahamātreṇa bhavantyākhaṇḍalaśriyaḥ /
līlāsṛṣṭamahāsṛṣṭeḥ kiyadetadramāpateḥ //
tathāpi bhajatāṃ nityaṃ kāmapūravidhitsayā /
līlāmānuṣadehena sarvamapyanuvartate //

The king of Gods (Indra) acquires and retains his control over wealth, fame, majesty, grandeur and glory of the whole world by virtue of his (the Lord Sri Ram's) benevolence, beneficence, benediction and munificence. He (Sri Ram) has created this massive and marvelous creation as if it were a mere game for him, i.e. without any troubles, exertions or efforts, almost playful for the sake of enjoyment, using his delusion creating and cosmic creative powers. What is this (i.e. what importance or allurements does this worldly kingdom of Ayodhya hold) for him? (7). Still, just to satisfy or fulfill the desires and wishes of his ardent devotees and to do their tasks for them (which they are unable to do themselves—such as killing their tormentor demons), he acts like an ordinary human being by assuming an illusionary form of a man (8).

ततः शत्रुघ्नवचनान्निपुणः श्मश्रुकृन्तकः। सम्भाराश्चाभिषेकार्थमानीता राघवस्य हि।। 9।।
पूर्वं तु भरते स्नाते लक्ष्मणे च महात्मनि। सुग्रीवे वानरेन्द्रे च राक्षसेन्द्रे विभीषणे।। 10।।

tataḥ śatrughnavacanānnipuṇaḥ śmaśrukṛntakaḥ /
sambhārāścābhiṣekārthamānītā rāghavasya hi //
pūrvaṃ tu bharate snāte lakṣmaṇe ca mahātmani /
sugrīve vānarendre ca rākṣasendre vibhīṣaṇe //

Then, on the instructions of Shatrughan, an expert barber was summoned, and all the required paraphernalia and accoutrements needed for Raghav's (Sri Ram's) coronation were collected (9). First Bharat and then the wise and great Laxman had a bath followed by the king of monkeys, Sugriv, and king of demons, Vibhishan (10).

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विशोधितजटः स्नातश्चित्रमाल्यानुलेपनः। महार्हवसनोपेतस्तस्थौ तत्र श्रिया ज्वलन्।। 11।।
प्रतिकर्म च रामस्य लक्ष्मणश्च महामतिः। कारयामास भरतः सीताया राजयोषितः।। 12।।

viśodhitajaṭaḥ snātaścitramālyānulepanaḥ /
mahārhavasanopetastasthau tatra śriyā jvalan //
pratikarma ca rāmasya lakṣmaṇaśca mahāmatiḥ /
kārayāmāsa bharataḥ sītāyā rājayoṣitaḥ //

When his matted hairs were cut and trimmed, he (Sri Ram) took his formal bath, and adorned himself with multi-coloured garlands and necklaces, along with different things that are used to adorn and decorate the body such as various fragrant ointments or sweet scents and priceless garments and robes. He presented a most magnificent, glorious, elegant and majestic view with his stupendously divine beauty, matchless glamour and enchanting radiance (11).

The great Laxman and Bharat helped Sri Ram deck himself up in all finery, while the royal women of the household helped Sita to decorate herself in a befitting manner (12).

महार्हवस्त्र भरणैरलञ्चक्रुः सुमध्यमाम्। ततो वानरपत्नीनां सर्वासामेव शोभना।। 13।।
अकारयत कौसल्या प्रहृष्टा पुत्रवत्सला। ततः स्यन्दनमादाय शत्रुघ्नवचनात्सुधीः।। 14।।
सुमन्त्रः सूर्यसंकाशं योजयित्वाग्रतः स्थितः। आरुरोह रथं रामः सत्यधर्मपरायणः।। 15।।

mahārhavastrābharaṇairalañcakruḥ sumadhyamām /
tato vānarapatnīnāṃ sarvāsāmeva śobhanā //
akārayata kausalyā prahṛṣṭā putravatsalā /
tataḥ syandanamādāya śatrughnavacanātsudhīḥ //
sumantraḥ sūryasaṅkāśaṃ yojayitvāgrataḥ sthitaḥ /
āruroha rathaṃ rāmaḥ satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ //

They decorated that auspicious and charming lady (Sita) with different types of priceless and magnificent clothes and royal robes as well as with ornaments studded with priceless gems and jewels. After that, the cheerfully delighted Kaushalya, who was affectionately fond of her son, decorated and honoured all the wives of the monkeys. Just about that time, at the instructions of Shatrughan, a chariot (13-14) which was as dazzling, spectacular and splendorous as the sun, was harnessed and brought by the most wise Sumantra (the old and trusted chief minister of the kingdom) and placed in front of them. The most honourable, truthful, righteous and virtuous Sri Ram got onto it (15).

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सुग्रीवो युवराजश्च हनमांश्च विभीषणः। स्नात्वा दिव्याम्बरधरा दिव्याभरणभूषिताः॥ 16॥
राममन्वीयुरग्रे च रथाश्वगजवाहनाः। सुग्रीवपत्न्यः सीता च ययुर्यानैः पुरं महत्॥ 17॥

sugrīvo yuvarājaśca hanumāṃśca vibhīṣaṇaḥ।
snātvā divyāmbaradharā divyābharaṇabhūṣitāḥ॥
rāmamanvīyuragre ca rathāśvagajavāhanāḥ।
sugrīvapatnyaḥ sītā ca yayuryānaiḥ puraṃ mahat॥

Sugriv, the crown prince (Angad), Hanuman and Vibhishan had a bath, decked (adorned) themselves with beautiful clothes, robes and ornaments (16), got atop chariots, horses and elephants reserved for them, and went alongside Sri Ram. Sugriv's wives and Sita rode shoulder-mounted carriages (palanquins). The group went towards the large city (of Ayodhya) from Nandigram (17).

वज्रपाणिर्यथा देवैर्हरिताश्वरथे स्थितः। प्रययौ रथमास्थाय तथा रामो महत्पुरम्॥ 18॥
सारथ्यं भरतश्चक्रे रत्नदण्डं महाद्युतिः। श्वेतातपत्रं शत्रुघ्नो लक्ष्मणो व्यजनं दधे॥ 19॥

vajrapāṇiryathā devairharitāśvarathe sthitaḥ।
prayayau rathamāsthāya tathā rāmo mahatpuram॥
sārathyaṃ bharataścakre ratnadaṇḍaṃ mahādyutiḥ।
śvetātapatraṃ śatrughno lakṣmaṇo vyajanaṃ dadhe॥

Just like the bearer of Vajra (i.e. Indra, the king of Gods) rides a chariot with green horses and goes somewhere in the company of Gods, Sri Ram too proceeded to his great and renowned city (surrounded by his retinue of monkeys, demon ministers, his own brothers, ministers, courtiers, Guru etc.) (18).

The most glorious, cheerful and radiant Bharat became his charioteer, Shatrughan held the ceremonial white umbrella with its rod studded with gems and jewels, while Laxman held the hand-held fan (19).

चामरं च समीपस्थो न्यवीजयदरिन्दमः। शशिप्रकाशं त्वपरं जग्राहासुरनायकः॥ 20॥
दिविजैः सिद्धसङ्घैश्च ऋषिभिर्दिव्यदर्शनैः। स्तूयमानस्य रामस्य शुश्रुवे मधुरध्वनिः॥ 21॥

cāmaraṃ ca samīpastho nyavījayadarindamaḥ।
śaśiprakāśaṃ tvaparaṃ jagrāhāsuranāyakaḥ॥
digvijaiḥ siddhasaṅghaiśca ṛṣibhirdivyadarśanaiḥ।
stūyamānasya rāmasya śuśruve madhuradhvaniḥ॥

The vanquisher of enemies (Sugriv) on one side and the king of

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demons (Vibhishan) on the other side of Sri Ram swayed the royal whisk which was beautiful, attractive and radiant like a magnificent full moon (20). At that time melodious, sweet and pleasant voices of Gods, cluster of Siddhas (mystics), sages, seers and hermits etc. were heard singing the divine glories, praises and adulations of Sri Ram in chorus. They had all assembled to have a divine and august view of the Lord (21).

मानुषं रूपमास्थाय वानरा गजवाहनाः। भेरीशङ्खनिनादैश्च मृदङ्गपणवानकैः॥22॥
प्रययौ राघवश्रेष्ठस्तां पुरीं समलङ्कृताम्। ददृशुस्ते समायान्तं राघवं पुरवासिनः॥23॥

mānuṣaṃ rūpamāsthāya vānarā gajavāhanāḥ।
bherīśaṅkhaninādaiśca mṛdaṅgapaṇavānakaiḥ॥
prayayau rāghavaśreṣṭhastāṃ purīṃ samalaṅkṛtām।
dadṛśuste samāyāntaṃ rāghavaṃ puravāsinaḥ॥

The monkeys assumed a human form and rode astride elephants. Amidst the clamour of various musical instruments such as kettledrums, conch shells, drums and tumbrels and different types of small drums called Panawa etc. playing simultaneously (22), Sri Ram— who is the best in king Raghu's clan— made his ceremonial formal entry into the city which resonated with these thunderous sounds to welcome him. The denizens watched enthralled and full of exhilaration as Raghav (Sri Ram) entered the city triumphantly (23).

[Note :—A Panawa is a two sided oblong shaped drum which is hung from the neck of the singer with light strings and is beaten by either the fingers or short, light sticks to play the sound of music.]

दूर्वादलश्यामतनुं महार्हकिरीटरत्नाभरणाञ्चिताङ्गम्।
आरक्तकञ्जायतलोचनान्तं दृष्ट्वा ययुर्मोदमतीव पुण्याः॥24॥
विचित्ररत्नाञ्चितसूत्रनद्धपीताम्बरं पीनभुजान्तरालम्।
अनर्घ्यमुक्ताफलदिव्यहारैर्विरोचमानं रघुनन्दनं प्रजाः॥25॥
सुग्रीवमुख्यैर्हरिभिः प्रशान्तैर्निषेव्यमाणं रवितुल्यभासम्।
कस्तूरिकाचन्दनलिप्तगात्रं निवीतकल्पद्रुमपुष्पमालम्॥26॥

dūrvādalaśyāmatanuṃ mahārhakirīṭaratnābharaṇāñcitāṅgam।
āraktakañjāyatalocanāntaṃ dṛṣṭvā yayurmodamatīva puṇyāḥ॥
vicitraratnāñcitasūtranaddhapītāmbaraṃ pīnabhujāntarālam।
anarghyamuktāphaladivyahārairvirocamānaṃ raghunandaṃ prajāḥ॥
sugrīvamukhyairharibhiḥ praśāntairniṣevyamāṇaṃ ravitulyabhāsam।
kastūrikācandanaliptagātraṃ nivītakalpadrumapuṣpamālam॥

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The righteous and noble citizens watched the dark complexion of Sri Ram's body which resembled the colour of Durba (a kind of dark green grass called *Agrostis Linearis*), was adorned with a very precious crown and gem/jewel studded ornaments, had broad, light pink eyes resembling a lotus flower (24), was attired in a magnificent Pitambar (a yellow body-wrapping garment worn by Lord Vishnu) decorated with multicoloured jewels and gems, and embroidered with golden threads. He had a large (broad) chest decorated with garlands and necklaces made of beautiful pearls. He was served by calm, peaceful and sober Sugriv as well as other chief monkeys, was as splendorous, majestic and radiant as the sun, was smeared with a paste of sandalwood and musk over his whole body, and wore a garland made of the flowers of the Kalpa tree (*Nyctanthes Arbortristis;* the Kalpa tree is the evergreen celestial tree of the Gods). The subjects of the kingdom were most jubilant, exhilarated and euphoric on seeing Raghunandan (Sri Ram) back in Ayodhya (25-26).

श्रुत्वा स्त्रियो राममुपागतं मुदा प्रहर्षवेगोत्कलिताननश्रियः।
अपास्य सर्वं गृहकार्यमाहितं हर्म्याणि चैवारुरुहुः स्वलङ्कृताः।। 27।।

śrutvā striyo rāmamupāgataṃ
mudā praharṣavegotkalitānanaśriyaḥ /
apāsya sarvaṃ gṛhakāryamāhitaṃ
harmyāṇi caivāruruhuḥ svalaṅkṛtāḥ //

When the womenfolk heard of the arrival of Sri Ram, they were very happy and extremely delighted so much so that their faces lit up with joy. They immediately left their routine household chores, decorated themselves and climbed to the terraces or attics of their homes (to watch the procession as it wend its way through the main avenue of the city (27).

दृष्ट्वा हरिं सर्वदृगुत्सवाकृतिं पुष्पैः किरन्त्यः स्मितशोभिताननाः।
दृग्भिः पुनर्नेत्रमनोरसायनं स्वानन्दमूर्तिं मनसाभिरेभिरे।। 28।।

dṛṣṭvā hariṃ sarvadṛgutsavākṛtiṃ
puṣpaiḥ kirantyaḥ smitaśobhitānanāḥ /
dṛgbhiḥ punarnetramanorasāyanaṃ
svānandamūrtiṃ manasābhirebhire //

Seeing Hari (Sri Ram), who represented the happiness and bliss of

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all or who provided happiness, bliss, peace and joy to all those present on the occasion, they (the womenfolk of the city) showered flowers on him with cheerfully smiling faces . Then they took that image (i.e. the magnificently charming, bewitching and elegant view of Sri Ram)—which provided happiness, contentedness and bliss to the eyes and heart of all—inside their heart through the path of their eyes and then repeatedly hugged that image internally in side their hearts [That is, they enshrined the image of Sri Ram in their hearts reverentially.] (28).

रामः स्मितस्निग्धदृशा प्रजास्तथा पश्यन्प्रजानाथ इवापरः प्रभुः।
शनैर्जगामाथ पितुः स्वलङ्कृतं गृहं महेन्द्रालयसन्निभं हरिः॥29॥

rāmaḥ smitasnigdhadṛśā prajāstathā
paśyanprajānātha ivāparaḥ prabhuḥ/
śanairjagāmātha pituḥ svalaṅkṛtaṃ
gṛhaṃ mahendrālayasannibhaṃ hariḥ//

Sri Ram smiled most sweetly and enchantingly and watched his subjects with pleasant bewitching glances of benevolence and reassurance. Lord Ram, who was a personification of Lord Vishnu himself, resembled the Prajapati (the celestial guardian who looks after the subjects of the vast kingdom created by Brahm; hence the name). He slowly moved towards the palace of his father which was like the palace of Indra in all its glories and was befittingly decorated for the occasion (29).

प्रविश्य वेश्मान्तरसंस्थितो मुदा रामो ववन्दे चरणौ स्वमातुः।
क्रमेण सर्वाः पितृयोषितः प्रभुर्ननाम भक्त्या रघुवंशकेतुः॥30॥

praviśya veśmāntarasaṃsthito mudā rāmo vavande caraṇau svamātuḥ/
krameṇa sarvāpitṛyoṣitaḥ prabhurnāma bhaktyā raghuvaṃśaketuḥ//

Once inside the palace, Sri Ram showed respect to his own mother (Kaushalya) by bowing at her feet. Then the most exalted of the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) showed similar respects to his other step-mothers (literally, the other wives of his father) with due honour, respect, devotion and humility (30).

ततो भरतमाहेदं रामः सत्यपराक्रमः। सर्वसम्पत्समायुक्तं मम मन्दिरमुत्तमम्॥31॥
मित्राय वानरेन्द्राय सुग्रीवाय प्रदीयताम्। सर्वेभ्यः सुखवासार्थं मन्दिराणि प्रकल्पय॥32॥

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tato bharatamāhedaṃ rāmaḥ satyaparākramaḥ /
sarvasampatsamāyuktaṃ mama mandiramuttamam //
mitrāya vānarendrāya sugrīvāya pradīyatām /
sarvebhyaḥ sukhavāsārthaṃ mandirāṇi prakalpaya //

Then Sri Ram, who was most righteous and truthful as well as most valiant, brave, strong, glorious and bold, said to Bharat, 'Allot my personal palace, which is well furnished and provided for (31), to my friend Sugriv, the king of monkeys. Likewise, show other comfortable palaces (residences) to others as well' (32).

रामेणैवं समादिष्टो भरतश्च तथाकरोत्। उवाच च महातेजाः सुग्रीवं राघवानुजः।। 33।।
राघवस्याभिषेकार्थं चतुःसिन्धुजलं शुभम्। आनेतुं प्रेषयस्वाशु दूतांस्त्वरितविक्रमान्।।34।।

rāmeṇaivaṃ samādiṣṭo bharataśca tathākarot /
uvāca ca mahātejāḥ sugrīvaṃ rāghavānujaḥ //
rāghavasyābhiṣekārthaṃ catuḥsindhujalaṃ śubham /
ānetuṃ preṣayasvāśu dūtāṃstvaritavikramān //

Bharat did as Sri Ram had instructed. Then the most glorious and radiant younger brother of Raghav (Bharat) said to Sugriv (33), 'Send swift messengers to bring the holy, sanctified and auspicious waters from the four oceans for the purpose of coronation ceremony of Raghav (Sri Ram)' (34).

[Note :—It is to be noted here that Bharat had requested Sugriv to send messenger to bring the holy waters and not his own men. The reason is all the men of Ayodhya were engaged in the preparation of the Lord's coronation, and another reason is that Bharat realised that the companions of Sugriv could literally 'fly' because he had witnessed them flying first hand when he saw Hanuman landing at Nandigram with the message of the Lord's arrival. So it would be quicker and easier for them to collect water from different holy sites as compared to humans. This plausible reason also highlights the fact that flying technology was not available in Ayodhya at that time. There is ample proof of it, as no where in the text is there any mention of a flying machine in the possession of the kings of Ayodhya. On the contrary, Ravana had the Pushpak plane, though it was snatched from Kuber, the God's treasurer, and certain of the monkeys, if there were indeed 'monkeys' as we understand those creatures today, could fly at will as if evident from the way Hanuman used to do at the slightest excuse. So Bharat decided to send them to utilise their ability to fly.]

प्रेषयामास सुग्रीवो जाम्बवन्तं मरुत्सुतम्। अङ्गदं च सुषेणं च ते गत्वा वायुवेगतः।। 35।।
जलपूर्णान् शातकुम्भकलशांश्च समानयन्। आनीतं तीर्थसलिलं शत्रुघ्नो मन्त्रिभिः सह।।36।।

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राघवस्याभिषेकार्थं वसिष्ठाय न्यवेदयत्। ततस्तु प्रयतो वृद्धो वसिष्ठो ब्राह्मणैः सह।। 37।।
रामं रत्नमये पीठे ससीतं संन्यवेशयत्। वसिष्ठो वामदेवश्च जाबालिर्गौतमस्तथा।। 38।।
वाल्मीकिश्च तथा चक्रुः सर्वे रामाभिषेचनम्। कुशाग्रतुलसीयुक्तपुण्यगन्धजलैर्मुदा।।39।।

preṣayāmāsa sugrīvo jāmbavantaṃ marutsutam /
aṅgadaṃ ca suṣeṇaṃ ca te gatvā vāyuvegataḥ //
jalapūrṇān śātakumbhakalaśāṃśca samānayan /
ānītaṃ tīrthasalilaṃ śatrughno mantribhiḥ saha //
rāghavasyābhiṣekārthaṃ vasiṣṭhāya nyavedayat /
tatastu prayato vṛddho vasiṣṭho brāhmaṇaiḥ saha //
rāmaṃ ratnamaye pīṭhe sasītaṃ saṃnyaveśayat /
vasiṣṭho vāmadevaśca jābālirgautamastathā //
vālmīkiśca tathā cakruḥ sarve rāmābhiṣecanam /
kuśāgratulasīyuktapuṇyagandhajalairmudā //

Then Sugriv sent Jamvant, Maruti (Hanuman), Angad and Sushen for this purpose. They went thither with the speed (swiftness) of wind (35) and brought the water in golden pots. Shatrughan, accompanied by the ministers, gave that sanctified water brought from different holy places (36) to Vashistha (the royal priest) for the purpose of Sri Ram's coronation ritual. Then, accompanied by Brahmins, the self-restrained and aged Vashistha (37) seated Sri Ram and Sita on a gem-studded throne. Sages Vashistha, Vamdeo, Jabali, Gautam (38), Valmiki and all other sages and seers most cheerfully and delightedly anointed Sri Ram on the throne (of Ayodhya) with sanctified, holy and perfumed water containing Kush grass and Tulsi (Basil) leaves (39).

अभ्यषिञ्चन् रघुश्रेष्ठं वासवं वसवो यथा। ऋत्विग्भिर्ब्राह्मणैः श्रेष्ठैः कन्याभिः सह मन्त्रिभिः।। 40।।
सर्वौषधिरसैश्चैव दैवतैर्नभसि स्थितैः। चतुर्भिर्लोकपालैश्च स्तुवद्भिः सगणैस्तथा।। 41।।

abhyaṣiñcan raghuśreṣṭhaṃ vāsavaṃ vasavo yathā /
ṛtvigbhirbrāhmaṇai śreṣṭhaiḥ kanyābhiḥ saha mantribhiḥ //
sarvauṣadhirasaiścaiva daivatairnabhasi sthitaiḥ /
caturbhilokapālaiśca stuvadbhiḥ saganaistathā //

Then those great sages (see verse nos. 37-39), accompanied by Ritwijs [a special category of Brahmins who are of the priestly class and perform religious sacrifices; see appendix no. 1 of this book], Brahmins (i.e. those Brahmins who are not Ritwijs), the best of damsels and virgins (who were invited on ceremonial occasions as

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representatives of divine Goddesses) and ministers prayed and honoured the Gods present (assembled) in the sky/heavens (to witness the happy coronation of the Lord) along with the four Lokpals (guardians or custodians of the four corners of the world), and their attendants and subordinates.

Thereafter, the sages once again anointed Sri Ram who was the best in the clan of Raghu with the holistic essence (juice, extract) of all the medicinal herbs (which are used during religious ceremonies and sacraments) just like Indra had been anointed by the Vasus at the time of his coronation (see also verse no. 71) (40-41).

[Note :— The Vasus are semigods numbering eight in number. They acted like the Ritwijs of the terrestrial world at the time of Indra's anointment.]

छत्रं च तस्य जग्राह शत्रुघ्नः पाण्डुरं शुभम्। सुग्रीवराक्षसेन्द्रौ तौ दधतुः श्वेतचामरे।। 42।।
मालां च काञ्चीनीं वायुर्ददौ वासवचोदितः। सर्वरत्नसमायुक्तं मणिकाञ्चनभूषितम्।।43।।
ददौ हारं नरेन्द्राय स्वयं शक्रस्तु भक्तितः। प्रजगुर्देवगन्धर्वा ननृतुश्चाप्सरोगणाः।। 44।।

chatraṃ ca tasya jagrāha śatrughnaḥ pāṇḍuraṃ śubham /
sugrīvarākṣasendrau tau dadhatuḥ śvetacāmare //
mālāṃ ca kāñcanīṃ vāyurdadau vāsavacoditaḥ /
sarvaratnasamāyuktaṃ maṇikāñcanabhūṣitam //
dadau hāraṃ narendrāya svayaṃ śakrastu bhaktitaḥ /
prajagurdevagandharvā nanṛtuścāpsaroganāḥ //

At this time, Shatrughan—who is the vanquisher of enemies—installed (held, placed) a most magnificent, auspicious and beautiful light yellow or cream coloured ceremonial umbrella over the head of Sri Ram, while Sugriv and Vibhishan held white whisks in their hands (42). At the behest (or inspiration, instance) of Indra, the Wind God (Maruti) offered a golden garland, while Indra himself devotionally and reverentially offered to Sri Ram a similar golden necklace richly studded with all the gems and jewels in existence. Thereafter, the Gods and Gandharvas began singing adulatory, felicitous and ceremonial songs, while the celestial damsels and courtesans (Apsaras) began to dance merrily (43-44).

देवदुन्दुभयो नेदुः पुष्पवृष्टिः पपात खात्। नवदूर्वादलश्यामं पद्मपत्रायतेक्षणम्।। 45।।
रविकोटिप्रभायुक्तकिरीटेन विराजितम्। कोटिकन्दर्पलावण्यं पीताम्बरसमावृतम्।।46।।
दिव्याभरणसम्पन्नं दिव्यचन्दनलेपनम्। अयुतादित्यसङ्काशं द्विभुजं रघुनन्दनम्।। 47।।

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devadundubhayo neduḥ puṣpavṛṣṭiḥ papāta khāt /
navadūrvādalaśyāmaṃ padmapatrāyatekṣaṇam //
ravikoṭiprabhāyuktakirīṭena virājitam /
koṭikandarpalāvaṇyaṃ pītāmbarasamāvṛtam //
divyābharaṇasampannaṃ divyacandanalepanam /
ayutādityasaṅkāśaṃ dvibhujaṃ raghunandanam //

There was a rapturous cacophony and tumultuous din of kettledrums played by the Gods in the sky, while flowers rained down everywhere.

[The following lines describe Sri Ram and Sita as they sat on the throne at that time—] He (Sri Ram) was dark complexioned like the colour of newly plucked Durba grass, had broad (large) eyes like the petals of a lotus flower (45), was adorned with a crown which was as splendorous, bright and dazzling as millions of suns shining brightly, was beautiful, attractive and charming like millions of Kamdeo-cupids, wore a Pitambar (46), was adorned with magnificent ornaments and divine garments and ceremonial robes, had divine sandalwood paste smeared on him, was as splendorous and radiant as a thousand suns put together, and Raghunandan (Sri Ram) looked most majestic, stupendous and fascinating with his two-armed form (as a human being) (47).

[Note :—(i) Durba grass is dark green in colour and is called *Agrostis Linearis* in latin. (ii) Pitambar is a golden threaded body-wrapping silk seamless garment worn by Vishnu. (ii) By specially highlighting the presence of 'two arms' in verse no. 47, the author Veda Vyas wants to emphasise the fact that Raghunandan, or Sri Ram, who has 2 arms as a human incarnation is no one else other than the 4-armed Lord Vishnu who is the sustainer of the universe and one of the Trinity Gods. In fact, even Brahma, the creator, has emerged from the lotus of Vishnu's navel while he was reclining on Sheshnath in the Kshir Sagar.]

वामभागे समासीनां सीतां काञ्चनसन्निभाम्। सर्वाभरणसम्पन्नां वामाङ्के समुपस्थिताम्।। 48।।
रक्तोत्पलकराम्भोजां वामेनालिङ्ग्य संस्थितम्। सर्वातिशयशोभाढ्यं दृष्ट्वा भक्तिसमन्वितः।।49।।
उमया सहितो देवः शङ्करो रघुनन्दनम्। सर्वदेवगणैर्युक्तः स्तोतुं समुपचक्रमे।। 50।।

vāmabhāge samāsīnāṃ sītāṃ kāñcanasannibhām /
sarvābharaṇasampannāṃ vāmāṅke samupasthitām //
raktotpalakarāmbhojāṃ vāmenāliṅgya saṃsthitam /
sarvātiśayaśobhāḍhyaṃ dṛṣṭvā bhaktisamanvitaḥ //

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umayā sahito devaḥ śaṅkaro raghunandanam /
sarvadevagaṇairyuktaḥ stotuṃ samupacakrame //

To the left of him (Sri Ram) was seated Sita who had a complexion resembling the hue of gold, was fully decorated with ornaments and ceremonial clothes befitting the occasion (48), and held a red lotus in her lotus-like hands. Sri Ram had placed his left arm affectionately on her shoulders. Seeing them seated in this posture, Lord Shiva, along with Uma (Parvati), became filled with devotion and affection for the Lord. Then he (Shiva) along with all other Gods began praising Raghunandan (Sri Ram) as follows (49-50)—

[Note :—Verse nos. 9-50 describe the preparation and the actual coronation of Sri Ram on the throne of Ayodhya.]

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

नमोऽस्तु रामाय सशक्तिकाय नीलोत्पलश्यामलकोमलाय।
किरीटहाराङ्गदभूषणाय सिंहासनस्थाय महाप्रभाय।।51।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

namo'stu rāmāya saśaktikāya nīlotpalaśyāmalakomalāya /
kirīṭahārāṅgadabhūṣaṇāya siṃhāsanasthāya mahāprabhāya //

'I bow in honour of Sri Ram together with his 'Shakti' (literally, Lord's cosmic energy; but here referring to Sita). He is dark complexioned and tender like a blue lotus, is decorated with a crown, a tiara, a garland or necklace, arm band etc., is seated on a throne, and is full of divine and brilliant radiance (51).

त्वमादिमध्यान्तविहीन एकः सृजस्यवस्यत्सि च लोकजातम्।
स्वमायया तेन न लिप्यसे त्वं यत्स्वे सुखेऽजस्त्ररतोऽनवद्यः।।52।।

tvamādimadhyāntavihīna ekaḥ sṛjasyavasyatsi ca lokajātam /
svamāyayā tena na lipyase tvaṃ yatsve sukhe'jasrarato'navadyaḥ //

Oh Lord! You are without a beginning, middle and an end, and are the only one of your kind. You create, sustain and annihilate the entire creation using your Maya (delusory power as well as the cosmic infinite creative energy), but are not involved in, attached to, affected or influenced by it because you are always established in a blissful, contented, happy and tranquil state of consciousness, and are absolutely faultless, without any blemishes and shortcomings, beyond reproach, and are uncorrupt and pristine pure (52).

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लीलां विधत्से गुणसंवृतस्त्वं प्रपन्नभक्तानुविधानहेतोः।
नानावतारैः सुरमानुषाद्यैः प्रतीयसे ज्ञानिभिरेव नित्यम्।।53।।

līlāṃ vidhatse guṇasaṃvṛtastvaṃ prapannabhaktānuvidhānahetoḥ /
nānāvatāraiḥ suramānuṣādyaiḥ pratīyase jñānibhireva nityam //

Surrounding (or investing/infusing) yourself willfully with the deluding characteristics of your Maya (i.e. you voluntarily allow yourself to be veiled in your Maya, you willingly invest yourself with its characteristics), you use it to carry out your wishes to take/assume various forms such as that of different Gods, humans and others. Then in those forms or incarnations, you do different types of deeds in order to show the righteous path of Dharma (i.e. path of righteousness, probity, propriety, ethics, morality, noble conduct etc.) to your devotees and followers who have taken shelter and refuge with you. At that time (i.e. during those incarnation or manifestation periods), only the wise and enlightened ones are able to recognise you (53).

[Note—You reveal yourself in different forms and lead a stellar life of righteousness and auspiciousness amongst your devotees to show them in practical terms how to behave and live in the world in the scripture-sanctioned way and consequentially attain emancipation and salvation. These devotees or followers are those who have submitted themselves to you and look forward to you for protection, guidance, example and precedence, who treat you as their moral preceptor and guide, as their Lord whom to look up to for succour and solace, as well as for their emancipation and salvation or deliverance from this mundane and entrapping world. When you reveal yourself as an incarnation or as a manifestation, your devotees do not have to look anywhere else for their guidance and example, for your own life acts as a beacon for them. They might not be scholarly enough to benefit from the study of scriptures, but they sing your glories and see your example in their day to day lives and easily attain that rare stature that is available by hard study of scriptures and doing severe penances and keeping austerities. The path of Bhakti is easier to follow for ordinary creatures as compared to the arduous path of knowledge that has its own pitfalls.

Please also refer to Lanka Kand, Canto 14, verse no.28-29 and Canto 16, verse nos. 26-28 in this context.]

स्वांशेन लोकं सकलं विधाय तं बिभर्षि च त्वं तदधः फणीश्वरः।
उपर्यधो भान्वनिलोडुपौषधिप्रवर्षरूपोऽवसि नैकधा जगत्।।54।।

svāṃśena lokaṃ sakalaṃ vidhāya taṃ bibharṣi ca tvaṃ tadadhaḥ phaṇīśvaraḥ /
uparyadho bhānvaniloḍupauṣadhipravarṣarūpo'vasi naikadhā jagat //

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You create the entire creation out of your own fraction and then take good care of it by bearing it or holding it aloft from below by becoming (assuming the form of) Sheshnath (the legendary, many-hooded serpent who holds the earth on its hood), and sustaining it from above by becoming the sun, the wind or air, the moon, the various herbs (medicinal products), and the rain. (54).

[Note—In other words, you not only create anything but also ensure that it is well taken care of. This is expected of a wise creator who is benevolent, munificent and magnanimous towards his creation. This verse implies that when one creates anything, he should provide for its maintenance and sustenance. One should not leave his responsibilities to others.]

त्वमहि देहभृतां शिखिरूपः पचसि भुक्तमशेषमजस्त्रम्।
पवनपञ्चकरूपसहायो जगदखण्डमनेन बिभर्षि।।55।।

tvamiha dehabhṛtāṃ śikhirūpaḥ pacasi bhuktamaśeṣamajasram /
pavanapañcakarūpasahāyo jagadakhaṇḍamanena bibharṣi //

You assume the form of digestive powers of the creature, and with the help of the five vital airs (wind forces; see Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 28-34), you digest and assimilate the food taken in by the creatures, thereby sustaining and nourishing the whole world (55).

[Note—The five vital wind forces that regulate life are the following:—(1) Pran, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (2) Apaan, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (3) Saman, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (4) Udaan, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (5) Vyan, the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium in the body and control the functioning of the other winds.]

चन्द्रसूर्यशिखिमध्यगतं यत् तेज ईश चिदशेषतनूनाम्।
प्राभवत्तनुभृतामिव धैर्यं शौर्यमायुरखिलं तव सत्त्वम्।।56।।

candrasūryaśikhimadhyagataṃ yat teja īśa cidaśeṣatanūnām /
prābhavattanubhṛtāmiva dhairyaṃ śauryamāyurakhilaṃ tava sattvam //

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Oh Lord! The splendour, radiance, dazzle, brilliance, majesty, magnificence and the potential powers that the moon, the sun and the fire possess, the pure, truthful and eternal consciousness that is the characteristic feature of all living creatures, and the virtues of tolerance/patience/fortitude/forbearance, of valour/valiance/bravery/courage, and the glory and fame that one acquires during a long life seem evident in those who possess a gross physical body—all of them are nothing else but your majestic and stupendously versatile powers and potent on display (56).

त्वं विरिञ्चिशिवविष्णुविभेदात् कालकर्मशशिसूर्यविभागात्।
वादिनां पृथगिवेश विभासि ब्रह्म निश्चितमनन्यदिहैकम्।।57।।

tvaṃ viriñciśivaviṣṇuvibhedāt kālakarmaśaśisūryavibhāgāt/
vādināṃ pṛthagiveśa vibhāsi brahma niścitamananyadihaikam//

It is you who appears in different forms such as Brahma (the creator), Shiva (the annihilator) and Vishnu (the sustainer) etc. as well as Kaal (the God of death, time and circumstance), Karma (the theory of deeds and rewards), the Moon and the Sun (the celestial bodies) etc. depending upon the beliefs and faiths of followers of different schools of thought and philosophy. But there is no doubt in the fact that you are one and the same supreme Brahm reflected, as it were, in all those separate and distinct forms or entities in which people of different denominations worship and recognise you (57).

मत्स्यादिरूपेण यथा त्वमेकः श्रुतौ पुराणेषु च लोकसिद्धः।
तथैव सर्वं सदसद्विभागस्त्वमेव नान्यद्भवतो विभाति।।58।।

matsyādirūpeṇa yathā tvamekaḥ
śrutau purāṇeṣu ca lokasiddhaḥ/
tathaiva sarvaṃ sadasadvibhāga-
stvameva nānyadbhavato vibhāti//

Even as you are described by the Vedas, Purans, time honoured traditions and folklore as having existed in myriad forms such as the huge legendary fish etc., whatever true or false that appears in this world—in other words, all the twin appearances in which the world is divided or separated into, viz. those things or perceptions that appear to be true and those that appear to be false—is nothing else but only your manifestation or image; there is nothing separate, different or distinct from you (58).

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यद्यत्समुत्पन्नमनन्तसृष्टावुत्पत्स्यते यच्च भवच्च यच्च।
न दृश्यते स्थावरजङ्गमादौ त्वया विनातः परतः परस्त्वम्।।59।।

yadyatsamutpannamanantasṛṣṭāvutpatsyate yacca bhavacca yacca/
na dṛśyate sthāvarajaṅgamādau tvayā vinātaḥ paratataḥ parastvam//

Whatever that has been produced, shall be produced in future and is being produced (or happening) in the present in this vast, measureless and endless creation which consists of both the inanimate, immovable, inert and dead as well as the movable, active, alive and animate (i.e. dual) aspects of the artificial, delusory and deceptive mundane world, are all myriad images of you, and there is nothing that exists and is visible which is separate from you. Hence, you are beyond all comprehension, measures, yardsticks and definitions (59).

तत्त्वं न जानन्ति परात्मनस्ते जनाः समस्तास्तव मायया तः।
त्वद्भक्तसेवामलमानसानां विभाति तत्त्वं परमेकमैशम्।।60।।

tattvaṃ na jānanti parātmanaste janāḥ samastāstava māyayātaḥ/
tvadbhaktasevāmalamānasānāṃ vibhāti tattvaṃ paramekamaiśam//

All people do not understand your essential and true nature or your fundamental form as the one who is 'Parmatma' (the transcendental, supreme, macrocosmic, all-pervading, omniscient Soul which is beyond definitions and attributes), because they are under the influence and spell of your deluding powers called Maya. Only those whose internal being (or their mind-intellect discriminating apparatus) have been purified due to the good influences of the services done by them toward your devotees and followers, are the ones who are able to perceive, experience or realise your true form, nature or essence as being the Parmatma (60).

ब्रह्मादयस्ते न विदुः स्वरूपं चिदात्मतत्त्वं बहिरर्थभावाः।
ततो बुधस्त्वामिदमेव रूपं भक्त्या भजन्मुक्तिमुपैत्यदुःखः।।61।।

brahmādayaste na viduḥ svarūpaṃ cidātmatattvaṃ bahirarthabhāvāḥ/
tato budhastvāmidameva rūpaṃ bhaktyā bhajanmuktimupaityaduḥkhaḥ//

Those who regard the external, illusionary world of material comforts and artificial sense objects as being real or truthful do not know or realise your true and real form and essence as being the pure, eternal and truthful consciousness, even though they may be as exalted

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and superior as the creator Brahma himself[1]. Hence, in order to avoid consternations, perplexities, confusions, dilemmas and doubts of all kinds, wise and sagacious persons worship you in this manifest and visible dark-complexioned form (as Sri Ram) with due and sincere devotion and dedication. As a result, they easily overcome sorrows, distresses, agonies and torments associated with this mundane, deluding and entangling world, and attain deliverance, emancipation and salvation (61).

[Note—[1]That is, even Lord Brahma from whom the four Vedas have emerged, cannot know your true form if he is not realistic enough to realise or recognise the fact that the creation which he calls his own product is, in fact, not what he thinks it to be—that is, a creation created by him (Brahma). It is an illusion/deception created by you which Brahma takes erroneously to be for real, and as his own product, forgetting in the process that the powers to create that he possesses have been delegated to him by you. In fact, even Brahma the creator has been created by you. So if such exalted and attained souls can be under the magical and misleading spell of your delusions creating powers, then what can one say of lesser souls.]

अहं भवन्नाम गृणन्कृतार्थो वसामि काश्यामनिशं भवान्या।
मुमूर्षमाणस्य विमुक्तयेऽहं दिशामि मन्त्रं तव राम नाम।।62।।

ahaṃ bhavannāma gṛṇankṛtārtho vasāmi kāśyāmaniśaṃ bhavānyā/
mumūrṣamāṇasya vimuktaye'haṃ diśāmi mantraṃ tava rāma nāma//

Being extremely thankful and grateful, feeling highly contented and fulfilled by constantly chanting your name, I live in Kashi (Varanasi) day and night. There I pronounce your divine and holy name 'Ram' which is called the 'Tarak Mantra' for the benefit of all those who die there and wish to achieve emancipation and salvation, to help them in fulfillment of their wishes (62).

[Note— The 'Tarak Mantra' of Lord Ram is elaborately described in Ramottartaponishad of the Atharva Veda tradition which is exclusively dedicated to Lord Ram, as well as in Tarak Upanishad of the Shukla Yajur Veda tradition which is dedicated to the subject of emancipation and salvation. The Tarak Mantra preached by Lord Shiva is that group of esoteric, ethereal and holy words, syllables or phrases that have stupendous magical and divine powers that can achieve miracles, and one of them is the ability to give liberation and deliverance to even sinful creatures who can never expect to find emancipation themselves. It gives freedom from miseries, fears, torments and other misfortunes that devour a creature. It liberates a creature from the cycle of birth and death, the

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miseries and fears associated with this world, with old age, death and their accompanying horrors etc. (Atharva-shikhar Upanishad,2/1,49; Advai-tarak Upanishad, 3; and Jabal Upanishad, canto 1. The ascetic/ Yogi achieves liberation and deliverance by concentrating his internal thoughts at a point between the eyebrows where he realises the supreme, transcendental existence of Brahm, and he mentally one with Brahm after this realisation (Advai-tarak-2,3). According to Ramottartaponishad, the divine emancipation and salvation providing Mantra is 'OM RANG RAMAYE NAMAHE' (Ramottartaponishad, 2/3). Atharva-shikhar Upanishad, 44 says that 'OM' is that Tarak Mantra.]

इमं स्तवं नित्यमनन्यभक्त्या शृण्वन्ति गायन्ति लिखन्ति ये वै।
ते सर्वसौख्यं परमं च लब्ध्वा भवत्पदं यान्तु भवत्प्रसादात्।।63।।

imaṃ stavaṃ nityamananyabhaktyā
śṛṇvanti gāyanti likhanti ye vai /
te sarvasaukhyaṃ paramaṃ ca labdhvā
bhavatpadaṃ yāntu bhavatprasādāt //

(Now I pray to you that—) Those who regularly listen, recite, preach or write this Stotra (i.e. these prayerful verses or hymns) enunciated by me, with the greatest of devotion and sincerity, should, by your grace, be rewarded with complete blissfulness, happiness, peace, contentedness as well as with the privilege of attaining your supreme, holy, divine and august feet. That is, they should find oneness with you (63).

[Note :—Verse nos. 51-63 can be called Lord Shiva's gospel and prayer.]

इन्द्र उवाच

रक्षोऽधिपेनाखिलदेव सौख्यं ह्रतं च मे ब्रह्मवरेण देव।
पुनश्च सर्वं भवतः प्रसादात् प्राप्तं हतो राक्षसदुष्टशत्रुः।।64।।

indra uvāca

rakṣo'dhipenākhiladeva saukhyaṃ hṛtaṃ ca me brahmavareṇa deva /
punaśca sarvaṃ bhavataḥ prasādāt prāptaṃ hato rākṣasaduṣṭaśatruḥ //

(After that, Lord Indra said his prayer—) 'Oh Lord! The king of demons had stolen (i.e. had barred me from enjoying) all the comforts which were due to me by the virtue of my being a God (or the king of Gods) because of the boon that he had received from Brahma. Now that the wicked enemy, the king of demons (Ravana with his kith and kin), has been killed—all those comforts have been restored

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back to me due to your magnanimity, grace, benevolence and munificence' (64).

[Note :—Indra was more concerned about being deprived of his comforts by the tyrannical terror that Ravana had unleashed on the world rather than the miseries the creation was suffering at his hand. Please also refer to Lanka Kand, Canto 13, verse no. 8 in this context.]

देवा ऊचुः

हृता यज्ञभागा धरादेवदत्ता मुरारे खलेनादिदैत्येन विष्णो।
हतोऽद्य त्वया नो वितानेषु भागाः पुरावद्भविष्यन्ति युष्मत्प्रसादात्।।65।।

devā ūcuḥ

hṛtā yajñabhāgā dharādevadattā
murāre khalenādidaityena viṣṇo /
hato'dya tvayā no vitāneṣu bhāgāḥ
purāvadbhaviṣyanti yuṣmatprasādāt //

The Gods prayed, 'Oh Murari (another name of Lord Krishna)! Oh Vishnu (the sustainer and one of the Trinity Gods)! This wicked demon, who was counted as the first (foremost) amongst the evil ones, had stolen (usurped) all the offerings given to us during the religious sacrifices done by Brahmins (literally, the living Gods of the earth, or the exalted and senior humans of the world). Now that you have killed him, we shall get back our share of the sacrifices in future as we used to get them previously. This has been made possible due to your grace, mercy, benevolence, munificence and magnanimity' (65).

पितर ऊचुः

हतोऽद्य त्वया दुष्टदैत्यो महात्मन् गयादौ नरैर्दत्तपिण्डादिकान्नः।
बलादत्ति हत्वा गृहीत्वा समस्तानिदानीं पुनर्लब्धसत्त्वा भवामः।।66।।

pitara ūcuḥ

hato'dya tvayā duṣṭadaitya mahātman
gayādau narairdattapiṇḍādikānnaḥ /
balādatti hatvā gṛhītvā samastā-
nidānīṃ punarlabdhasattvā bhavāmaḥ //

The ancestors (i.e. the spirits of dead ancestors) said, 'Oh the great and noble soul! This rascal demon used to forcibly snatch the 'Pinda' offered by humans, i.e. our descendants, to us at the holy sites (of

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Gaya etc.), and he ate them up. (As a result, we had to starve.) Now that you have killed him, we shall get back our share of the food offered as Pinda (cereals etc. offered to dead ancestors as rounded balls, called 'Pindas') and once again regain our lost strength and energy. [Since we were deprived of food and nourishment in the form of Pinda, we became starved and weak.] (66).

[Note :—Like Indra and other Gods, these fellows were also happy because they will get something as ordinary and humdrum as food to eat!]

यक्षा ऊचुः

सदा विष्टिकर्मण्यनेनाभियुक्ता वहामो दशास्यं बलाद्दुःखयुक्ताः।
दुरात्मा हतो रावणो राघवेश त्वया ते वयं दुःखजाताद्विमुक्ताः।।67।।

yakṣā ūcuḥ

sadā viṣṭikarmaṇyanenābhiyuktā
vahāmo daśāsyaṃ balādduḥkhayuktāḥ /
durātmā hato rāvaṇo rāghaveśa
tvayā te vayaṃ duḥkhajātādvimuktāḥ //

The Yakshas said, 'Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! The 10-headed Ravana used to forcibly make us work incessantly like serfs and used to yoke us to his shoulder-mounted carriage (called palanquin) etc., and this created great misery and distress to us. We had to carry him under coercion and like a slave. Hence, by killing this wretched and evil one, you have liberated us from immense troubles and torments' (67).

[Note :—The Yakshas are a class of semigods employed by Kuber, the treasurer of Gods and brother of Ravana, to guard the treasury of Gods and take care of celestial gardens.]

गन्धर्वा ऊचुः

वयं सङ्गीतनिपुणा गायन्तस्ते कथामृतम्। आनन्दामृतसन्दोहयुक्ताः पूर्णाः स्थिताः पुरा।।68।।
पश्चाद्दुरात्मना राम रावणेनाभिविद्रुताः। तमेव गायमानाश्च तदाराधनतत्पराः।।69।।

gandharvā ūcuḥ

vayaṃ saṅgītanipuṇā gāyantaste kathāmṛtam /
ānandāmṛtasandohayuktāḥ pūrṇāḥ sthitāḥ purā //
paścāddurātmanā rāma rāvaṇenābhividrutāḥ /
tameva gāyamānāśca tadārādhanatatparāḥ //

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The Gandharvas said, 'We, who are experts in the art of music, used to sing your glorious nectar-like divine stories and remain ever blissful and engrossed in it (68).

But under the threat of Ravana, who was most wicked, pervert and evil, we had stopped singing your glories and praises, and instead, we sang his glories and served him (69).

[Note :—The Gandharvas are semigods who are the celestial musicians.]

स्थितास्त्वया परित्राता हतोऽयं दुष्टराक्षसः। एवं महोरगाः सिद्धाः किन्नरा मरुतस्तथा।। 70।।
वसवो मुनयो गावो गुह्यकाश्च पतत्रिणः। सप्रजापतयश्चैते तथा चाप्सरसां गणाः।। 71।।

sthitāstvayā paritrātā hato'yaṃ duṣṭarākṣasaḥ/
evaṃ mahoragāḥ siddhāḥ kinnarā marutastathā//
vasavo munayo gāvo guhyakāśca patattriṇaḥ/
saprajāpatayaścaite tathā cāpsarasāṃ gaṇāḥ//

By killing this rascal of a demon, you have given relief and succour to us from his torments'. In a similar manner, the great legendary serpent (Sheshnath), the Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones), the Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers), Marut (the Wind God) (70), Vasus (one of the demigods who has eight subordinates under him; see also verse no. 41), the different sages, seers and hermits, the holy cows (representing all the peaceful and docile animals), the cave dwellers (such as lions, bears etc. as well as those ascetics who resided in seclusion of caves to do penances and austerities), the various birds, Prajapati (the guardians or custodians of the subjects created by Brahma), and the groups of Apsaras (celestial courtesans) (71)—

सर्वे रामं समासाद्य दृष्ट्वा नेत्रमहोत्सवम्। स्तुत्वा पृथक् पृथक् सर्वे राघवेणाभिवन्दिताः।। 72।।
ययुः स्वं स्वं पदं सर्वे ब्रह्मरुद्रादयस्तथा। प्रशंसन्तो मुदा रामं गायन्तस्तस्य चेष्टितम्।। 73।।
ध्यायन्तस्त्वभिषेकार्द्रं सीतालक्ष्मणसंयुतम्। सिंहासनस्थं राजेन्द्रं ययुः सर्वे हृदि स्थितम्।। 74।।

sarve rāmaṃ samāsādya dṛṣṭvā netramahotsavam/
stutvā pṛthak pṛthak sarve rāghaveṇābhivanditāḥ//
yayuḥ svaṃ svaṃ padaṃ sarve brahmarudrādayastathā/
praśaṃsanto mudā rāmaṃ gāyantastasya ceṣṭitam//
dhyāyantastvabhiṣekārdraṃ sītālakṣmaṇasaṃyutam/
siṃhāsanasthaṃ rājendraṃ yayuḥ sarve hṛdi sthitam//

All of them (as listed in verse nos. 70-71) came to visit Sri Ram and had the divine view (Darshan) of Sri Ram who enhances the pleasures

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and privileges of one having the benefit of sight (literally, whose sight is a treat or feast for the eyes, and who is very pleasant to behold). They prayed to him separately (individually) and went back to their respective abodes after being duly honoured and shown respect by him (Sri Ram) (72).

After that, Brahma, Shiva (Rudra) and others also went back to their respective abodes, all the while praising the glories of Sri Ram most fondly, cheerfully and exhilarant, singing about his worldly sports and cheerful activities (73), and remembering the glorious, divine and majestic view of the King of kings (i.e. emperor Sri Ram) seated on the throne at the time of his coronation along side Sita and Laxman. They installed (i.e. enshrined) that stupendously beautiful and enchanting image in their hearts, and took leave of the Lord to go their way (74).

खे वाद्येषु ध्वनत्सु प्रमुदितहृदयैर्देववृन्दैः स्तुवद्भिर्वर्षद्भिः
पुष्पवृष्टिं दिवि मुनिनिकरैरीड्यमानः समन्तात्।
रामः श्यामः प्रसन्नस्मितरुचिरमुखः सूर्यकोटिप्रकाशः
सीतासौमित्रिवातात्मजमुनिहरिभिः सेव्यमानो विभाति।।75।।

khe vādyeṣu dhvanatsu pramuditahṛdayairdevavṛndaiḥ stuvadbhi-
rvarṣadbhiḥ puṣpavṛṣṭiṃ divi muninikarairīḍyamānaḥ samantāt /
rāmaḥ śyāmaḥ prasannasmitaruciramukhaḥ sūryakoṭiprakāśaḥ
sītāsaumitrivātātmajamuniharibhiḥ sevyamāno vibhāti //

At that time there was a rapturous and tumultuous cacophony of various musical instruments being played enthusiastically in the sky (heavens). The Gods showered flowers from there being overwhelmed with ecstasy, jubilation and exhilaration, and they chanted adulatory hymns in honour of the Lord in unison, with great devotion and dedication for the Lord. Groups/clusters of ascetics, sages, hermits and seers stood everywhere and sang praises for the Lord. Sri Ram—who had a dark complexion, smiled pleasantly with a cheerful face, looked as splendorous, radiant and glorious as crores (millions) of suns—was being served (i.e. attended) by Sita, son of Sumitra (Laxman), the son of the Wind God (Hanuman), various sages, seers, hermits and ascetics as well as by numerous monkeys (who had come with Sri Ram on the plane). He looked most charming and radiant, adorable and magnificent, elegant and stupendous (75).

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Lanka Kand (Yuddha Kand) — Canto 16

Departure of the monkeys back to Kishkindha; Sri Ram's reign as King of Ayodhya The glory of Adhyatma Ramayan

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

रामेऽभिषिक्ते राजेन्द्रे सर्वलोकसुखावहे। वसुधा सस्यसम्पन्ना फलवन्तो महीरुहाः॥ 1॥
गन्धहीनानि पुष्पाणि गन्धवन्ति चकाशिरे। सहस्रशतमश्वानां धेनूनां च गवां तथा॥ 2॥
ददौ शतवृषान्पूर्वं द्विजेभ्यो रघुनन्दनः। त्रिंशत्कोटि सुवर्णस्य ब्राह्मणेभ्यो ददौ पुनः॥ 3॥

śrīmahādeva uvāca

rāme'bhiṣikte rājendre sarvalokasukhāvahe /
vasudhā sasyasampannā phalavanto mahīruhāḥ //
gandhahīnāni puṣpāṇi gandhavanti cakāśire /
sahasraśatamaśvānāṃ dhenūnāṃ ca gavāṃ tathā //
dadau śatavṛṣānpūrvaṃ dvijebhyo raghunandanaḥ /
triṃśatkoṭi suvarṇasya brāhmaṇebhyo dadau punaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! At the coronation of Sri Ram, the King of kings, the whole world achieved peace, tranquility, auspiciousness and well-being, the earth was endowed with wealth and prosperity, and the trees became laden with fruits (1). The flowers that had no fragrance became scented and looked charming and adorable. Raghunandan (Sri Ram) gave (donated as gift or largesse) one lakh horses, similar number of cows and hundreds of oxen to Brahmins, and he then capped it all with additional thiry crore gold coins (2-3).

[Note :—1 lakh = 100 thousand; 1 crore = 10 million]

वस्त्राभरणरत्नानि ब्राह्मणेभ्यो मुदा तथा। सूर्यकान्तिसमप्रख्यां सर्वरत्नमयीं स्रजम्॥ 4॥
सुग्रीवाय ददौ प्रीत्या राघवो भक्तवत्सलः। अङ्गदाय ददौ दिव्ये ह्यङ्गदे रघुनन्दनः॥ 5॥

vastrābharaṇaratnāni brāhmaṇebhyo mudā tathā /
sūryakāntisamaprakhyāṃ sarvaratnamayīṃ srajam //
sugrīvāya dadau prītyā rāghavo bhaktavatsalaḥ /
aṅgadāya dadau divye hyaṅgade raghunandanaḥ //

(Not satisfied with it) He further gave them different varieties of clothes, robes and ornaments, including gems and jewels. Then Raghav

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(Sri Ram)—who is dear to his devotees and is fond of them as well as most munificent, benevolent and magnanimous towards them—gave, most affectionately, to Sugriv a dazzling garland studded with all types of jewels and gems, and which had the brilliance similar to that of the sun. He gave two magnificent armbands to Angad (4-5).

चन्द्रकोटिप्रतीकाशं मणिरत्नविभूषितम्। सीतायै प्रददौ हारं प्रीत्या रघुकुलोत्तमः।। 6।।
अवमुच्यात्मनः कण्ठाद्धारं जनकनन्दिनी। अवैक्षत हरीन्सर्वान् भर्तारं च मुहुर्मुहुः।। 7।।

candrakoṭipratīkāśaṃ maṇiratnavibhūṣitam /
sītāyai pradadau hāraṃ prītyā raghukulottamaḥ //
avamucātmanaḥ kaṇṭhāddhāraṃ janakanandinī /
avaikṣata harīnsarvān bhartāraṃ ca muhurmuhuḥ //

After that, the best in the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) gave, most affectionately, a necklace studded with priceless gems and jewels, and shining brilliantly like crores (millions) of moons to Sita (6). The daughter of Janak (Sita) took off that necklace, and she repeatedly glanced at her husband and then at the monkeys (7).

रामस्तामाह वैदेहीमिङ्गितज्ञो विलोकयन्। वैदेहि यस्य तुष्टासि देहि तस्मै वरानने।। 8।।
हनूमते ददौ हारं पश्यतो राघवस्य च। तेन हारेण शुशुभे मारुतिर्गौरवेण च।। 9।।

rāmastāmāha vaidehīmiṅgitajño vilokayan /
vaidehi yasya tuṣṭāsi dehi tasmai varānane //
hanūmate dadau hāraṃ paśyato rāghavasya ca /
tena hāreṇa śuśubhe mārutirgauraveṇa ca //

Getting the hint from Sita, Sri Ram turned towards her and said, 'Oh Vaidehi (Sita)! Give this necklace to anyone with whom you are pleased' (8). Then she gave that necklace to Hanuman while Raghav (Sri Ram) watched. Wearing that necklace, Maruti (Hanuman) looked most auspicious, glorious and radiant, and he felt extremely privileged and honoured (9).

रामोऽपि मारुतिं दृष्ट्वा कृताञ्जलिमुपस्थितम्। भक्त्या परमया तुष्ट इदं वचनमब्रवीत्।। 10।।
हनूमंस्ते प्रसन्नोऽस्मि वरं वरय काङ्क्षितम्। दास्यामि देवैरपि यद्दुर्लभं भुवनत्रये।। 11।।

rāmo'pi mārutiṃ dṛṣṭvā kṛtāñjalimupasthitam /
bhaktyā paramayā tuṣṭa idaṃ vacanamabravīt //
hanūmaṃste prasanno'smi varaṃ varaya kāṅkṣitam /
dāsyāmi devairapi yaddurlabhaṃ bhuvanatraye //

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Sri Ram also saw Maruti standing in front of him with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer, and being very impressed and pleased at his devotion and dedication, he said to him (10), 'Oh Hanuman! I am very pleased with you. Ask for any boon that you wish. Any boon, which is difficult even for the Gods to acquire in the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds), I shall grant it to you for sure (11).

हनूमानपि तं प्राह नत्वा रामं प्रहृष्टधीः। त्वन्नाम स्मरतो राम न तृप्यति मनो मम।। 12।।
अतस्त्वन्नाम सततं स्मरन् स्थास्यामि भूतले। यावत्स्थास्यति ते नाम लोके तावत्कलेवरम्।। 13।।
मम तिष्ठतु राजेन्द्र वरोऽयं मेऽभिकाङ्क्षितः। रामस्तथेति तं प्राह मुक्तस्तिष्ठ यथासुखम्।। 14।।

hanūmānapi taṃ prāha natvā rāmaṃ prahṛṣṭadhīḥ/
tvannāma smarato rāma na tṛpyati mano mama//
atastvannāma satataṃ smaran sthāsyāmi bhūtale/
yāvatsthāsyati te nāma loke tāvatkalevaram//
mama tiṣṭhatu rājendra varo'yaṃ me'bhikāṅkṣitaḥ/
rāmastatheti taṃ prāha muktastiṣṭha yathāsukham//

Then Hanuman replied to him most delightedly, 'Oh Sri Ram! My mind and heart are not contented and never satisfied by remembering and repeating your holy name (12). Hence, I should forever stay on this earth remembering and repeating your divine name. As long as your divine and holy name exists on this earth, my body (13) should also survive for the same period. Oh king! This is my only desired boon'.

Sri Ram replied, 'So be it. You will happily stay in this world as a liberated, enlightened, dispassionate, detached and emancipated soul (14).

कल्पान्ते मम सायुज्यं प्राप्स्यसे नात्र संशयः। तमाह जानकी प्रीता यत्र कुत्रापि मारुते।। 15।।
स्थितं त्वामनुयास्यन्ति भोगाः सर्वे ममाज्ञया। इत्युक्तो मारुतिस्ताभ्यामीश्वराभ्यां प्रहृष्टधीः।। 16।।

kalpānte mama sāyujyaṃ prāpsyase nātra saṃśayaḥ/
tamāha jānakī prītā yatra kutrāpi mārute//
sthitaṃ tvāmanuyāsyanti bhogāḥ sarve mamājñayā/
ityukto mārutistābhyāmīśvarābhyāṃ prahṛṣṭadhīḥ//

At the end of the Kalpa (i.e. the four Yug celestial cycle consisting of Sat, Treta, Dwapar and the present Kali Yugs), you will attain oneness with me, there is no doubt about it'

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Then, Janki (Sita) said to him full of affection, 'Oh Maruti! Wherever you stay, all the comforts and pleasures shall present themselves before you there on the spot on my divine commands'.

Maruti (Hanuman) felt extremely pleased and delighted on hearing these words from Sita as well as from his Lord Sri Ram (15-16).

आनन्दाश्रुपरीताक्षो भूयो भूयः प्रणम्य तौ। कृच्छ्राद्ययौ तपस्तप्तुं हिमवन्तं महामतिः।। 17।।
ततो गुहं समासाद्य रामः प्राञ्जलिमब्रवीत्। सखे गच्छ पुरं रम्यं शृङ्गवेरमनुत्तमम्।। 18।।

ānandāśruparītākṣo bhūyo bhūyaḥ praṇamya tau /
kṛcchādyayau tapastaptuṃ himavantaṃ mahāmatiḥ //
tato guhaṃ samāsādya rāmaḥ prāñjalimabravīt /
sakhe gaccha puraṃ ramyaṃ śṛṅgaveramanuttamam //

With eyes full of tears of joy and exhilaration, he (Hanuman) repeatedly bowed before them (Sri Ram and Sita), and then the most wise, enlightened, sagacious, erudite and great Hanuman most reluctantly[1] went to the Himalayas to perform severe Tapa (penances, austerities, meditation etc.)[1] (17).

Thence, Sri Ram went to Guha (Nishad, the chief of the boatman community) who was waiting with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer, and said to him, 'Oh friend! Now you must go back to your most pleasant city of Sringverpuram (18).

[Note :—[1]There is a very important point to note here. Earlier in Lanka Kanda, canto 14, verse no.60-61, we have seen that Bharat had rewarded Hanuman with a lot of wealth, including 100 villages, upon the latter's conveying to the former the auspicious news of Sri Ram's arrival. Besides this, he had got such rare boons from both Ram and Sita after the coronation ceremony as is clear from verse no.10-16 above. Under ordinary circumstances, Hanuman could have lived a luxurious life like a small king.

But inspite of that, Hanuman had gone to the Himalayas to do Tapa. No one has asked Hanuman to go to the Himalayas to do penances and austerities; he could have gone back to Kishkindha also along with other monkeys. But there is a difference between the rest and Hanuman—it is not without reason he has been called as being the 'most wise, self-realised, erudite and enlightened', for his communion with the Lord had its needed effects and he was filled with renunciation and detachment towards this perishable and ensnaring world. We must remember that in this Ramayan in particular, no chapter passes when there is no discourse on some or

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the other aspect of theology, metaphysics and spirituality. Hanuman had been carefully listening to them, and whereas the others simply heard them and perhaps kept them in their backburners for use in old age, Hanuman did not waste any time in understanding their import and gravity, and took them in all seriousness in his heart. This filled him with renunciation and dispassion. He forsook all comforts and pleasures, and instead decided that he would go to the sylvan surroundings of the Himalayas and do Tapa. He did not want to get entangled in worldly things. He did not wish to enter the humdrum of daily life which he might be forced to enter if he had preferred to go to Kishkindha.

Since Adhyatma Ramayan's emphasis is more on metaphysics, spiritualism and philosophical aspects of divinity rather than devotion and service as is the wont of Bhakti cult saints, and more so because the author of this Ramayan is Veda Vyas himself who was a man of Tapa, he preferred to send Hanuman, whom he describes as a 'Mahamati' (egkerh)—one who is most wise, sagacious, erudite, self-realised and enlightened—to do what such souls would prefer to do and are expected to do—that is Tapa, rather than serve Sri Ram like a humble servant, which is the wont of Bhakti cult saints.

Meanwhile, during the time that he spent at the Himalayas, he was absent from the service of the Lord at Ayodhya, as is very evident in Verse no.17 which clearly implies that Hanuman was not present during the routine daily life of Sri Ram at Ayodhya. This is in sharp contrast to and contrary to the general belief and portraits painted of Sri Ram's court (Ram Darbar) by the Bhakti cult saints in which Hanuman is shown seated on his knees at the feet of Sri Ram who is on the throne alongside Sita. But this later version is also true, because when his penances were completed, he would later on come back in the service of the Lord, and the Lord would keep him because he knew who Hanuman was—not an ordinary creature but an enlightened soul, and the Lord has manifested for such souls, and they are very dear and near to his heart. Serving one's chosen deity or Lord like a humble servant is the wont of Bhakti cult saints, so they preferred to make Hanuman serve Sri Ram throughout his stay in Ayodhya.

The fact that he was reluctant to take leave of Sri Ram shows his deep, abiding bond with the Lord. Hanuman was most attached to Sri Ram than anybody else on this earth. But being an enlightened and realised soul, he wished to atone himself first by doing Tapa in the Himalayas in the true tradition of saints and sages who preferred final emancipation and salvation and merging of their soul with the supreme Soul which Sri Ram represented. When the Lord had asked everyone to proceed to their respective homes—which he had to do and could not avoid because it was not practical to keep them at Ayodhya for a very long period of time, Hanuman felt very confounded that now he would have to part

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from his beloved Lord, a proposition that was not acceptable to him. But at the same time, the Lord's orders had to be complied with, and it would have seemed very odd that when all are obeying his orders, Hanuman seems to be the odd man out, as it were.

There is another reason for Hanuman deciding to go to the Himalayas, though this episode is not mentioned here. According to another version of the epic story written by Goswami Tulsidas, called 'Ram Charit Manas', in its Uttar Kand, Doha 17 Kha to 18 Kha, the text which is the most revered and popular version in the north of India, Angad had also insisted that he would remain in the service of the Lord instead of going back to Kishkindha. But the Lord politely prevailed upon him that he should go back, one of the reasons being that Angad was made the crown prince of Kishkindha and it would be highly improper to keep him in service of the Lord. But Hanuman was no less an important functionary in the royal court of Kishkindha, and in all probability, Sugriv would have insisted that he come along. So the only option left open for Hanuman was to proceed somewhere else and later on come back in the service of the Lord.]

मामेव चिन्तयन्नित्यं भुङ्क्ष्व भोगान्निजार्जितान्। अन्ते ममैव सारूप्यं प्राप्स्यसे त्वं न संशयः ।। 19 ।।
इत्युक्त्वा प्रददौ तस्मै दिव्यान्याभरणानि च। राज्यं च विपुलं दत्त्वा विज्ञानं च ददौ विभुः ।।20 ।।

māmeva cintayannityaṃ bhuṅkṣva bhogānnijārjitān /
ante mamaiva sārūpyaṃ prāpsyase tvaṃ na saṃśayaḥ //
ityuktvā pradadau tasmai divyānyābharaṇāni ca /
rājyaṃ ca vipulaṃ dattvā vijñānaṃ ca dadau vibhuḥ //

Remembering me constantly, you will enjoy the rewards of the good and noble deeds done by you. There is no doubt that at the end (of your life), you shall attain oneness of your soul with that of mine' (19).

Saying thus, the Vibhu (omnipresent, benevolent, eternal, almighty, magnanimous, omniscient Lord) gifted him magnificent ornaments, a lot of landed property (for e.g., villages, districts, farms etc.), and preached him (Guha) on the philosophy (principles) of the essential truth of this existence' (20).

रामेणालिङ्गितो हृष्टो ययौ स्वभवनं गुहः। ये चान्ये वानराः श्रेष्ठा अयोध्यां समुपागताः ।। 21 ।।
अमूल्याभरणैर्वस्त्रैः पूजयामास राघवः। सुग्रीवप्रमुखाः सर्वे वानराः सविभीषणाः ।। 22 ।।
यथार्हं पूजितास्तेन रामेण परमात्मना। प्रहृष्टमनसः सर्वे जग्मुरेव यथागतम् ।। 23 ।।

rāmeṇāliṅgito hṛṣṭo yayau svabhavanaṃ guhaḥ /
ye cānye vānarāḥ śreṣṭhā ayodhyāṃ samupāgatāḥ //

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amulyābharaṇairvastraiḥ pūjayāmāsa rāghavaḥ /
sugrīvapramukhāḥ sarve vānarāḥ savibhīṣaṇāḥ //
yathārham pūjitāstena rāmeṇa paramātmanā /
prahṛṣṭamanasaḥ sarve jagmureva yathāgatam //

Then, after having had the privilege of being embraced by Sri Ram, Guha most cheerfully went home. All other noble and respected monkeys, who had come to Ayodhya (with Sri Ram) (21), were duly honoured by Raghav (Sri Ram) with priceless robes and ornaments. In this manner, all the monkeys, including Sugriv and accompanied by Vibhishan (22), were duly honoured by Sri Ram, the supreme Lord, and then all of them went back to their respective homes with a cheerful and delighted mind and heart (23).

सुग्रीवप्रमुखाः सर्वे किष्किन्धां प्रययुर्मुदा। विभीषणस्तु सम्प्राप्य राज्यं निहतकण्टकम्॥ 24॥
रामेण पूजितः प्रीत्या ययौ लङ्कामनिन्दितः। राघवो राज्यमखिलं शशासाखिलवत्सलः॥ 25॥

sugrīvapramukhāḥ sarve kiṣkindhāṃ prayayurmudā /
vibhīṣaṇastu samprāpya rājyaṃ nihatakaṇṭakam //
rāmeṇaḥ pūjitaḥ prītyā yayau laṅkāmaninditaḥ /
rāghavo rājyamakhilaṃ śaśāsākhilavatsalaḥ //

Sugriv and other monkeys went happily back to Kishkindha while Vibhishan got his kingdom (of Lanka) without any hurdles or obstacles (i.e. without any opposition or fear from enemies) (24). He was duly and affectionately honoured by Sri Ram and he most gladly went back to Lanka. (Having bid good bye to his companions from Lanka and Kishkindha) Raghav—who is benevolent, munificent, magnanimous, benign and beneficent towards all—began to rule over his whole kingdom in right earnest (25).

अनिच्छन्नपि रामेण यौवराज्येऽभिषेचितः। लक्ष्मणः परया भक्त्या रामसेवापरोऽभवत्॥ 26॥
रामस्तु परमात्मापि कर्माध्यक्षोऽपि निर्मलः। कर्तृत्वादि विहीनोऽपि निर्विकारोऽपि सर्वदा॥ 27॥
स्वानन्देनापि तुष्टः सन् लोकानामुपदेशकृत्। अश्वमेधादियज्ञैश्च सर्वैर्विपुलदक्षिणैः॥ 28॥

anicchannapi rāmeṇa yauvarājye'bhiṣecitaḥ /
lakṣmaṇaḥ parayā bhaktyā rāmasevāparo'bhavat //
rāmastu paramātmāpi karmādhyakṣo'pi nirmalaḥ /
kartṛtvādi vihīno'pi nirvikāro'pi sarvadā //
svānandenāpi tuṣṭaḥ san lokānāmupadeśakṛt /
aśvamedhādiyajñaiśca sarvairvipuladakṣiṇaiḥ //

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Inspite of his reluctance, Sri Ram appointed Laxman as the crown prince and the latter remained in the service of Sri Ram with full sincerity, dedication and devotion (26).

Sri Ram—though being the macrocosmic transcendental supreme soul, who is a witness to all the deeds done and actions taken by all the creatures, who is eternally and everlastingly pure, clean and uncorrupt, who is free from the conception of doing deeds or taking actions and their incumbent rewards and fruits, who is always and immutably faultless, without blemishes, beyond reproach, changeless and uniform (27), who is self contented and remains blissful, tranquil and satisfied—had assumed a human form to teach (i.e. set an example) as well as to preach the whole world (on the morals, ethics, ethos, maxims and axioms of Dharma, i.e. righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct etc., as well as the intricate details of philosophy, spiritualism, the essential nature of creation, the truth behind it etc., in short, to light the beacon of knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment for the entire human race). He also performed large horse sacrifices entailing huge donations and great largesse (28).

[Note :—Refer Lanka Kand, Canto 15, verse no. 53, footnote in this context.]

अयजत्परमानन्दो मानुषं वपुराश्रितः। न पर्यदेवन्विधवा न च व्यालकृतं भयम्।। 29।।
न व्याधिजं भयं चासीद्रामे राज्यं प्रशासति। लोके दस्युभयं नासीदनर्थो नास्ति कश्चन।। 30।।

ayajatparamānanda mānuṣaṃ vapurāśritaḥ/
na paryadevanvidhavā na ca vyālakṛtaṃ bhayam//
na vyādhijaṃ bhayaṃ cāsīdrāme rājyaṃ praśāsati/
loke dasyubhayaṃ nāsīdanartho nāsti kaścana//

[The following verses describe the glorious reign of the Lord at Ayodhya.]

There was no warfare, quarrel, conflict, animosity, ill-will, malice, jealousy, envy, hatred, vengefulness, acrimony and retribution amongst the people, and they were very happy, delighted, contented and peaceful during the reign of Sri Ram. There was no wailings or lamentations of widows; there was no fear from serpents (or any other poisonous creatures), diseases and bandits/thieves/robbers etc., nor did any misfortune, disastrous or calamitous event happen in the realm of Sri Ram (29-30).

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वृद्धेषु सत्सु बालानां नासीन्मृत्युभयं तथा। रामपूजापराः सर्वे सर्वे राघवचिन्तकाः।। 31।।
ववर्षुर्जलदास्तोयं यथाकालं यथारुचि। प्रजाः स्वधर्मनिरता वर्णाश्रमगुणान्विताः।। 32।।

vṛddheṣu satsu bālānāṃ nāsīnmṛtyubhayaṃ tathā /
rāmapūjāparāḥ sarve sarve rāghavacintakāḥ //
vavarṣurjaladāstoyaṃ yathakālaṃ yathāruci /
prajāḥ svadharmaniratā varṇāśramaguṇānvitāḥ //

There was no fear of death of children, while the aged (or elders) lived the full length of their lives (i.e. there was no premature death). Everyone used to worship, adore and remember with devotion Sri Ram (who was the supreme Lord of the world in human form) (31).

The clouds gave sufficient rain as desired by the people and at the proper time. [That is, there was neither excess nor deficient rainfall.] The subjects of the kingdom followed the respective duties assigned to them in the society, and they possessed the virtues and values of their respective class and clan in the society (32).

औरसानिव रामोऽपि जुगोप पितृवत्प्रजाः। सर्वलक्षणसंयुक्तः सर्वधर्मपरायणः।। 33।।
दशवर्षसहस्राणि रामो राज्यमुपास्त सः।। 34।।

aurasāniva rāmo'pi jugopa pitṛvatprajāḥ /
sarvalakṣaṇasaṃyuktaḥ sarvadharmaparāyaṇaḥ //
daśavarṣasahasrāṇi rāmo rājyamupāsta saḥ //

Sri Ram looked after his subjects as if they were his sons and he was their father. In this manner, Sri Ram—who was endowed with all the good and noble virtues, values and characteristics, and diligently followed all the tenets of righteousness and noble conduct in every respect—ruled for 10 thousand years (33-34).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 28-34 describe in brief the reign of Sri Ram. See also Uttar Kand, Canto 4, verse no. 21-31 in this context. (ii) The following verse nos. 35-49 describe the importance of Adhyatma Ramayan.]

इदं रहस्यं धनधान्यऋद्धिमद्दीर्घायुरारोग्यकरं सुपुण्यदम्।
पवित्रमाध्यात्मिकसंज्ञितं पुरा रामायणं भाषितमादिशम्भुना।। 35।।

idaṃ rahasyaṃ dhanadhānyaṛddhima-
ddīrghāyurārogyakaraṃ supuṇyadam /
pavitramādhyātmikasaṃjñitaṃ purā
rāmāyaṇaṃ bhāṣitamādiśambhunā //

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[The glory and significance of Adhyatma Ramayan is being described now.]

The benefits, rewards and the benediction provided by this most sacred and holy scripture called 'Adhyatma Ramayan', which was first enunciated by Lord Shambhu (Lord Shiva) for the benefit of Parvati (his consort), are numerous. It bestows wealth, prosperity, good fame, renowned glory, well-being, long life, disease free body, and all other auspiciousness and goodness (35).

श्रृणोति भक्त्या मनुजः समाहितो भक्त्या पठेद्वा परितुष्टमानसः।
सर्वाः समाप्नोति मनोगताशिषो विमुच्यते पातककोटिभिः क्षणात्।।36।।

śṛṇoti bhaktyā manujaḥ samāhito
bhaktyā paṭhedvā parituṣṭamānasaḥ /
sarvāḥ samāpnoti manogatāśiṣo
vimucyate pātakakoṭibhiḥ kṣaṇāt //

Those persons who listen to it with Bhakti (i.e. firm faith, conviction, humility, devotion, dedication, sincerity, belief, submissive demeanors etc.), with full concentration, attentively and with due focus of mind and intellect, or read it with a delighted mind and heart, are able to fulfill all the desires of their heart and are instantly liberated/ freed from millions of sins and evils (i.e. their tarnishing, entangling, denigrating and other negative effects) (36).

रामाभिषेकं प्रयतः श्रृणोति यो धनाभिलाषी लभते महद्धनम्।
पुत्राभिलाषी सुतमार्यसम्मतं प्राप्नोति रामायणमादितः पठन्।।37।।

rāmābhiṣekaṃ prayataḥ śṛṇoti yo
dhanābhilāṣi labhate mahaddhanam /
putrābhilāṣī sutamāryasammataṃ
prāpnoti rāmāyaṇamāditaḥ paṭhan //

Those who have desire for wealth, prosperity and property, and hear the episode of Sri Ram's coronation (on the throne of Ayodhya) with deep concentration and attention, are definitely bestowed with immense fortunes and good luck. Those who desire a son and read this Ramayan from the very beginning are blessed with a son who is honoured and respected by all the wise people (37).

श्रृणोति योऽध्यात्मिकरामसंहितां प्राप्नोति राजा भुवमृद्धसम्पदम्।
शत्रून्विजित्यारिभिरप्रधर्षितो व्यपेतदुःखो विजयी भवेन्नृपः।।38।।

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śṛṇoti yo'dhyātmikarāmasaṃhitāṃ
prāpnoti rājā bhuvamṛddhasampadam /
śatrūnvijityāribhirapradharṣito
vyapetaduḥkho vijayī bhavennṛpaḥ //

A king who hears this spiritual treatise or scripture called Adhyatma Ramayan is blessed with land (realm) full of prosperity and well-beings, and is never subjected to insults, defeat or humiliation in front of his opponents or enemies, is always victorious, and is freed from all sorts of sorrows, miseries, torments, troubles, anguish, consternations, perplexities and confoundedness (38).

स्त्रियोऽपि श्रृण्वन्त्यधिरामसंहितां भवन्ति ता जीविसुताश्च पूजिताः।
वन्ध्यापि पुत्रं लभते सुरूपिणं कथामिमां भक्तियुता श्रृणोति या।।39।।

strīyo'pi śṛṇvantyadhirāmasaṃhitāṃ
bhavanti tā jīvisutāśca pūjitāḥ /
vandhyāpi putraṃ labhate surūpiṇaṃ
kathāmimāṃ bhaktiyutā śṛṇoti yā //

Amongst the women, those who hear this spiritual treatise or scripture called Adhyatma Ramayan, have long living children and are themselves respected by them (i.e. their children). Even those women who are infertile (sterile) and who listen to this divine story with due devotion and sincerity, are bestowed with the boon of handsome sons (39).

श्रद्धान्वितो यः श्रृणुयात्पठेन्नरो विजित्य कोपं च तथा विमत्सरः।
दुर्गाणि सर्वाणि विजित्य निर्भयो भवेत्सुखी राघवभक्तिसंयुतः।।40।।

śraddhānvito yaḥ śṛṇuyātpaṭhennaro
vijitya kopaṃ ca tathā vimatsaraḥ /
durgāṇi sarvāṇi vijitya nirbhayo
bhavetsukhī rāghavabhaktisaṃyutaḥ //

Anyone who overcomes anger, ill-will, malice, hatred and animosity as well as jealousy, envy and other such negative traits and then reads or hears this Ramayan with due faith, devotion, sincerity and conviction, is able to vanquish all evil tendencies and inclinations, all evil manners and negative characteristics that he might possess, and he becomes fearless and happy, contented and peaceful, and is blessed with devotion for Sri Ram (40).

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सुराः समस्ता अपि यान्ति तुष्टतां विघ्नाः समस्ता अपयान्ति श्रृण्वताम्।
अध्यात्मरामायणमादितो नृणां भवन्ति सर्वा अपि सम्पदः पराः।।41।।

surāḥ samastā api yānti tuṣṭatāṃ
vighnāḥ samastā apayānti śṛṇvatām /
adhyātmarāmāyaṇamādito nṛṇāṃ
bhavanti sarvā api sampadaḥ parā //

All the Gods become pleased, favourable and benevolent towards those who hear this Adhyatma Ramayan from the very beginning. Besides this, all their hurdles, misfortunes and oppositions are removed and dispelled, and they are able to obtain or acquire all types of excellent wealth and prosperity (41).

रजस्वला वा यदि रामतत्परा श्रृणोति रामायणमेतदादितः।
पुत्रं प्रसूते ऋषभं चिरायुषं पतिव्रता लोकसुपूजिता भवेत्।।42।।

rajasvalā vā yadi rāmatatparā
śṛṇoti rāmāyaṇametadāditaḥ /
putraṃ prasūte ṛṣabhaṃ cirāyuṣaṃ
pativratā lokasupūjitā bhavet //

Those women who are menstruating, if they diligently remember and invoke Sri Ram with devotion and dedication, and hear this Ramayan from the beginning, then they give birth to (i.e. are blessed with) most fortunate and long-living sons, and they themselves are respected by the society in the world as being virtuous, chaste and loyal women (42).

पूजयित्वा तु ये भक्त्या नमस्कुर्वन्ति नित्यशः। सर्वैः पापैर्विनिर्मुक्ता विष्णोर्यान्ति परं पदम्।। 43।।
अध्यात्मरामचरितं कृत्स्नं श्रृण्वन्ति भक्तितः। पठन्ति वा स्वयं वक्त्रात्तेषां रामः प्रसीदति।।44।।

pūjayitvā tu ye bhaktyā namaskurvanti nityaśaḥ /
sarvaiḥ pāpairvinirmuktā viṣṇoryānti paraṃ padam //
adhyātmarāmacaritaṃ kṛtsnaṃ śṛṇvanti bhaktitaḥ /
paṭhanti vā svayaṃ vaktrātteṣāṃ rāmaḥ prasīdati //

Those who worship and adore daily, regularly, consistently and persistently this Ramayan with due devotion, dedication, sincerity, faith, firm conviction, humility and submission, and bow before it to show reverence, honour and high esteem, are liberated from all their sins, vices, evils, perversions, misdeeds and misdemeanors (and their

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consequential effects). They achieve, as a result, the supreme abode of Lord Vishnu (43). Those who hear or read this divine story of Sri Ram called 'Adhyatma Ram Charit'[1] themselves, are able to make Sri Ram pleased with them and become benevolent, munificent and benign towards them. (44).

[Note—[1]It is very pertinent to note this particular nomenclature for this Ramayan. The word 'Adhyatma' means that which pertains to the spirit or soul, and of course 'Ram Charit' means the deed that Ram did during his incarnation here on this earth. The combined name means that story of Ram which is spiritually uplifting and provides emancipation and salvation to the soul of the creature who hears and reads it. Goswami Tulsidas has derived the inspiration for naming his epic as 'Ram Charit Manas' from this verse. The word Manas means a Mana or the heart and mind which have been converted into a lake wherein the story of the Lord's deeds has been filled.]

राम एव परं ब्रह्म तस्मिंस्तुष्टेऽखिलात्मनि। धर्मार्थकाममोक्षाणां यद्यदिच्छति तद्भवेत्।। 45।।
श्रोतव्यं नियमेनैतद्रामायणमखण्डितम्। आयुष्यमारोग्यकरं कल्पकोट्यघनाशनम्।। 46।।
देवाश्च सर्वे तुष्यन्ति ग्रहाः सर्वे महर्षयः। रामायणस्य श्रवणे तृप्यन्ति पितरस्तथा।। 47।।

rāma eva paraṃ brahma tasmiṃstuṣṭe'khilātmani /
dharmārthakāmamokṣāṇāṃ yadyadicchati tadbhavet //
śrotavyaṃ niyamenaitadrāmāyaṇamakhaṇḍitam /
āyuṣyamārogyakaraṃ kalpakoṭyaghanāśanam //
devāśca sarve tuṣyanti grahāḥ sarve maharṣayaḥ /
rāmāyaṇasya śravaṇe tṛpyanti pitarastathā //

Sri Ram is the supreme Lord (Brahm). Hence, when this all-pervading supreme Lord who is the 'Soul' of the universe is pleased, any of the four fruits of Artha (wealth, prosperity and well-being), Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble conduct), Kaam (fulfillment of worldly desires) and Moksha (emancipation and salvation) as desired by the seeker can be easily obtained by him (45).

Therefore, one should consistently, persistently and constantly, with due diligence and sincerity, without disruption and distraction of any kind, hear this Ramayan which has the potential to bestow a long life and freedom from diseases (representing torments of all kinds), as well as is capable of destroying the accumulated effects of sins and evil deeds done over millions of years (46).

By hearing the recitation of this Adhyatma Ramayan, all the Gods,

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stars, sages/seers/hermits etc. become pleased and benevolent, while the spirit of the dead ancestors too achieve satisfaction (47).

अध्यात्मरामायणमेतदद्भुतं वैराग्यविज्ञानयुतं पुरातनम्।
पठन्ति शृण्वन्ति लिखन्ति ये नरास्तेषां भवेऽस्मिन्न पुनर्भवो भवेत्।।48।।

adhyātmarāmāyaṇametadadbhūtaṃ
vairāgyavijñānayutaṃ purātanam /
paṭhanti śṛṇvanti likhanti ye narā-
steṣāṃ bhave'sminna punarbhavo bhavet //

Those persons who read, hear or write about this magnificent, marvelous, splendid, stupendous and wonderful ancient scripture called Adhyatma Ramayan with a sense of detachment and renunciation from this mundane, artificial, materialistic, delusory and entrapping world, and do so with true enlightenment, erudition, sagacity, self-realisation and wisdom, do not take birth again in this world (48).

आलोड्याखिलवेदराशिमसकृद्यत्तारकं ब्रह्म तद्रामो
विष्णुरहस्यमूर्तिरिति यो विज्ञाय भूतेश्वरः।
उद्धृत्याखिलसारसङ्ग्रहमिदं संक्षेपतः प्रस्फुटं
श्रीरामस्य निगूढतत्त्वमखिलं प्राह प्रियायै भवः।।49।।

āloḍyākhilavedarāśimasakṛdyattārakaṃ brahma
tadrāmo viṣṇurahasyamūrtiriti yo vijñāya bhūteśvaraḥ /
uddhṛtyākhilasārasaṅgrahamidaṃ saṃkṣepataḥ prasphuṭaṃ
śrīrāmasya nigūḍhatattvamakhilaṃ prāha priyāyai bhavaḥ //

The Lord of Ghosts (Lord Shiva) has decided (i.e. determined, deduced or reached to the conclusion) after churning (deeply contemplating, researching, reasoning, splitting thread bare to arrive at the truth) all the available spiritual treasures in the form of huge tomes, voluminous treatises and scriptures such as the Vedas etc., that the divine word 'Ram' is the 'Tarak Mantra'[1]. This word 'Ram' is also a representative image of (and synonymous with) Lord Vishnu himself who is mysterious, esoteric and beyond comprehension. Therefore, he (Shiva) told his dear consort (Parvati) the essence of the Upanishads (and their philosophy and tenets, their axioms and maxims) briefly by the medium of this Ramayan. This philosophy encapsulating the pristine wisdom contained in the various scriptures, their maxims,

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axioms, irrefutable truths and tenets has—as its final deduction, conclusion and proclamation—this essential fact that Sri Ram's holy and divine name provides deliverance from this mundane, deluding, entrapping and perishable world, besides giving emancipation and salvation to the creature. This fact is the essential, unequivocal and irrefutable truth (49).

[Note :—(i) [1]The Tarak Mantra is a group of ethereal words, or a holy sound that is called a Mantra and which is able or potent enough to provide deliverance to the creature from this mundane, delusory, entrapping world, or in other words, it has the potential to give deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the soul. The Tarak Mantra of the Lord has been described in canto 15, note to verse no.62.].

(ii) The importance of Adhyatma Ramayan has also been described in the very first chapter called prologue— Mahatamya/importance of this book.]

***

ध्यान

ध्यायेत् कल्पतरोर्मूले सुवर्णमयमण्डपे। पुष्पकारव्यविमानान्तः सिंहासनपरिच्छदे ।।
पद्मे वसुदले देवमिन्द्रनीलसमप्रभम्। वीरासनसमासीनं ज्ञानमुद्रोपशोभितम्।।
वामोरुन्यस्ततद्धस्तं सीतालक्ष्मणसेवितम्। रत्नाकल्पं विभुं ध्यात्वा वर्णलक्षं जपेन्मनुम्।।
यद्वा स्मरादिमन्त्राणां जयाभं च हरिं स्मरेत् ।

(ना० पु० तृ० 73/59-62)

dhyāna

dhyāyet kalpatarormūle suvarṇamayamaṇḍape/
puṣpakāravyavimānāntaḥ siṃhāsanaparicchade//
padme vasudale devamindranīlasamaprabham/
vīrāsanasamāsīnaṃ jñānamudropaśobhitam//
vāmorunyastataddhastaṃ sītālakṣmaṇasevitam/
ratnākalpaṃ vibhuṃ dhyātvā varṇalakṣaṃ japenmanum//
yadvā smarādimantrāṇāṃ jayābhaṃ ca hariṃ smaret/

(Nārada Purāṇa, Pūrvārdha, 73/59-62)

Prayer

There is a large pavilion (or dais) under the Kalpa tree [the Nyctanthes arvor tristis tree]. Inside it (or on the dais), is the celestial

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Pushpak plane (of Kuber). There is a divine and glorious throne in the plane. The throne has a seating mat made of 8-petalled lotus flower on which is seated Sri Ram in a 'Virasan' posture (i.e. cross-legged and straight spined). His complexion is dark like a 'Indra Neel Mani' (the blue gem worn by Indra). His right hand is held in a 'Gyan Mudra' (with palms open, facing outwards, in a blessing posture held near the shoulder, with the fore and hind arms held closely against the chest) and his left hand rests on his left thigh. He is being served by Sita and Laxman. The 'Vibhu' (omnipresent, all-pervading, omniscient) is adorned by gem and jewel studded ornaments. One should remember and concentrate (focus) his attention on this magnificent view of Sri Ram and do Japa (repetition) of his holy Mantra, and persistently and constantly remember Hari (Vishnu) (Narad Puran, Purvardh, 73/59-62).

ध्यान

अयोध्यानगरे रत्नचित्रसौवर्णमण्डपे। मन्दारपुष्पैराबद्धविताने तोरणान्विते।।
सिंहासनसमासीनं पुष्पकोपरि राघवम्। रक्षोभिर्हरिभिर्देवैः सुविमानगतैः शुभैः।।
संस्तूयमानं मुनिभिः प्रह्वैश्च परिसेवितम्। सीतालंकृतवामाङ्गं लक्ष्मणेनोपशोभितम्।।
श्यामं प्रसन्नवदनं सर्वाभरणभूषितम्।

(ना० पुराण, पूर्व० 73/68-71)

ayodhyānagare ratnacitrasauvarṇamaṇḍape/
mandārapuṣpairābaddhavitāne toraṇānvite//
siṃhāsanasamāsīnaṃ puṣpakopari rāghavam/
rakṣobhirharibhirdevaiḥ suvimānagataiḥ śubhaiḥ//
saṃstūyamānaṃ munibhiḥ prahvaiśca parisevitam/
sītālaṃkṛtavāmāṅgaṃ lakṣmaṇenopaśobhitam//
śyāmaṃ prasannavadanaṃ sarvābharaṇabhūṣitam/

Prayer

In the city of Ayodhya, there is a marvellously majestic pavilion studded with gems and jewels. It has a canopy of flowers of the Kalpa tree [the Nyctanthes arvor tristis tree; the Mandaar tree] over it and decorated with festoons of flowers and green leaves. Inside it, Raghav (Sri Ram) is seated on a divine and glorious throne aboard the celestial plane (of Kuber) called Pushpak. The auspicious Gods, monkeys, demons and humble and submissive sages/seers/hermits/monks/

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ascetic etc. have assembled to pray and serve the Lord. Sita adorns his left side while goddess Laxmi his right. He has a glowing, radiant dark complexion. His face is cheerful and he is adorned with all types of ornaments and royal regalia (Narad Puran, Purvardh, 73/68-71).

प्रभ्राजमानां हरिणीं यशसा सम्परीवृतां पुरं हिरण्ययीं ब्रह्मा विवेशापराजिताम्।

(अथर्व वेद 10/2/33)

prabhrājamānāṃ hariṇīṃ yaśasā samparīvṛtāṃ puraṃ hiraṇyayīṃ brahmāviveśāparājitām / *(Atharva Veda 10/2/33)*

The all-pervading Lord (Sri Ram) has his divine residence in that unconquerable city of Ayodhya. He is stupendously radiant and richly endowed with a magnificent fame and glory which can destroy/ eliminate/exhaust all the sins, misdeeds and unrighteousness. (Atharva Veda 10/2/33)

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UTTAR KAND

Uttar Kand — Canto 1

Arrival of Sage Agastya in the court of Sri Ram;
The previous live story of Ravana and other demons

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

जयति रघुवंशतिलकः कौसल्याह्रदयनन्दनो रामः।
दशवदननिधनकारी दाशरथिः पुण्डरीकाक्षः।। 1।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

jayati raghuvaṃśatilakaḥ kausalyāhṛdayanandano rāmaḥ /
daśavadananidhanakārī dāśarathiḥ puṇḍarikākṣaḥ //

Glory to Sri Ram, the most exalted one in the clan of king Raghu, who is dear to the heart of Kaushalya, is the one who caused the death of the 10-headed Ravana, is the son of Dashrath, and is lotus-eyed (1).

पार्वत्युवाच

अथ रामः किमकरोत्कौसल्यानन्दवर्धनः। हत्वा मृधे रावणादीन् राक्षसान्भीमविक्रमः।। 2।।
अभिषिक्तस्त्वयोध्यायां सीतया सह राघवः। मायामानुषतां प्राप्य कति वर्षाणि भूतले।। 3।।
स्थितवान् लीलया देवः परमात्मा सनातनः। अत्यजन्मानुषं लोकं कथमन्ते रघूद्वहः।। 4।।
एतदाख्याहि भगवान् श्रद्दधत्या मम प्रभो। कथापीयूषमास्वाद्य तृष्णां मेऽतीव वर्धते।
रामचन्द्रस्य भगवन् ब्रूहि विस्तरशः कथाम्।। 5।।

pārvatyuvāca

atha rāmaḥ kimakarotkausalyānandavardhanaḥ /
hatvā mṛdhe rāvaṇādīn rakṣasānbhīmavikramaḥ //
abhiṣiktastvayodhyāyāṃ sītayā saha rāghavaḥ /
māyāmānuṣatāṃ prāpya kati varṣāṇi bhūtale //
sthitavān līlayā devaḥ paramātmā sanātanaḥ /
atyajanmānuṣaṃ lokaṃ kathamante raghūdvahaḥ //
etadākhyāhi bhagavan śraddadhatyā mama prabho /

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kathāpīyuṣamāsvādya tṛṣṇā me'tīva vardhate /
rāmacandrasya bhagavan brūhi vistaraśaḥ kathām //

Goddess Parvati asked, 'What did Sri Ram—who was the enhancer of the happiness of (his mother) Kaushalya and who had killed the most brave and valiant demons such as Ravana etc. in the war—do (2) after being anointed on the throne of Ayodhya along with Sita? How many years did Raghav (Sri Ram) live on this earth after he had assumed an illusionary form of a human? (3). And, how did the exalted Raghu—who was the eternal, truthful, imperishable, unchangeable supreme Lord but was acting like an ordinary man by the virtue of his own deluding powers called 'Maya' and acting playfully as a human—finally made his exit from this mortal, terrestrial world? (4).

Oh Lord (Shiva)! I am eager and earnestly wish to hear all this in detail; so please do tell me the whole story in a chronological order. Oh Lord! My thirst for this knowledge has increased manifold to drink more and more of the nectar-like drink called Ram's divine story. Hence, do tell me the divine story of Sri Ram in detail (5).

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

राक्षसानां वधं कृत्वा राज्ये राम उपस्थिते। आययुर्मुनयः सर्वे श्रीराममभिवन्दितुम्।।6।।
विश्वामित्रोऽसितः कण्वो दुर्वासा भृगुरङ्गिराः। कश्यपो वामदेवोऽत्रिस्तथा सप्तर्षयोऽमलाः।।7।।
अगस्त्यः सह शिष्यैश्च मुनिभिः सहितोऽभ्यगात्। द्वारमासाद्य रामस्य द्वारपालमथाब्रवीत्।।8।।
ब्रूहि रामाय मुनयः समागत्य बहिःस्थिताः। अगस्त्यप्रमुखाः सर्वे आशीर्भिरभिनन्दितुम्।।9।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

rākṣasānāṃ vadhaṃ kṛtvā rājye rāma upasthite /
āyayurmunayaḥ sarve śrīrāmamabhivanditum //
viśvāmitro'sitaḥ kaṇvo durvāsā bhṛgurańgirāḥ /
kaśyapo vāmadeva'tristathā saptarṣayo'malāḥ //
agastyaḥ saha śiṣyaiśca munibhiḥ sahito'bhyagāt /
dvāramāsādya rāmasya dvārapālamathābravīt //
brūhi rāmāya munayaḥ samāgatya bahiḥsthitāḥ /
agastyapramukhāḥ sarve āśīrbhirabhinanditum //

Lord Shiva replied, 'Oh Parvati! After the slaying of all the savage demons, when Sri Ram assumed the reign of Ayodhya, all the hermits, sages and seers assembled there to honour and felicitate him (6). At that time, amongst others, were present sages Vishwamitra, Asit,

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Kanwa, Durvasa, Bhrigu, Angira, Kashyam, Vamdeo, Atri, the pure minded Saptarishis (7), and sage Agastya accompanied by his retinue of disciples, and an assortment of other sages and seers. Sage Agastya said to the gatekeepers of Sri Ram's palace (8), 'Go and tell Sri Ram that sage Agastya and other honourable saints, sages and seers have come to bless and felicitate you, and all of them are standing (waiting) at the gates' (9).

प्रतीहारस्ततो राममगस्त्यवचनाद्द्रुतम्। नमस्कृत्याब्रवीद्वाक्यं विनयावनतः प्रभुम्।। 10।।
कृताञ्जलिरुवाचेदमगस्त्यो मुनिभिः सह। देव त्वद्दर्शनार्थाय प्राप्तो बहिरुपस्थितः।। 11।।

pratihārastato rāmamagastyavacanāddrutam /
namaskṛtyābravīdvākyaṃ vinayāvanataḥ prabhum //
kṛtāñjaliruvācedamagastyo munibhiḥ saha /
deva tvaddarśanārthāya prāpto bahirupasthitaḥ //

Then the sentries went to Sri Ram bowed before him and said most respectfully (10) with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer, 'Oh Lord! Sage Agastya has come to meet you (i.e. to have your divine Darshan) along with other sages, and they are standing at the entrance' (11).

तमुवाच द्वारपालं प्रवेशय यथासुखम्। पूजिता विविशुर्वेश्म नानारत्नविभूषितम्।। 12।।
दृष्ट्वा रामो मुनीन् शीघ्रं प्रत्युत्थाय कृताञ्जलिः। पाद्यार्घ्यादिभिरापूज्य गां निवेद्य यथाविधि।। 13।।

tamuvāca dvārapālaṃ praveśaya yathāsukham /
pūjitā viviśurveśma nānāratnavibhūṣitam //
dṛṣṭvā rāmo munīn śīghraṃ pratyutthāya kṛtāñjaliḥ /
pādyārghyādibhirāpūjya gāṃ nivedya yathāvidhi //

He (Sri Ram) instructed the gatekeeper, 'Bring them in most cheerfully and show them due respect'. Then the sages were duly welcomed and worshipped (i.e. they were shown due honour and respect) as they entered the royal palace decorated with numerous varieties of gems and jewels (12). As soon as Sri Ram saw the sages and seers, he immediately stood up with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of respect for them, and he gifted them one cow each after duly welcoming and worshipping them by washing their feet and offering them oblations (13).

नत्वा तेभ्यो ददौ दिव्यान्यासनानि यथार्हतः। उपविष्टाः प्रहृष्टाश्च मुनयो रामपूजिताः।। 14।।
सम्पृष्टकुशलाः सर्वे रामं कुशलमब्रुवन्। कुशलं ते महाबाहो सर्वत्र रघुनन्दन।।15।।

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natvā tebhyo dadau divyānyāsanāni yathārhataḥ /
upaviṣṭā prahṛṣṭāśca munayo rāmapūjitāḥ //
sampṛṣṭākuśalāḥ sarve rāmaṃ kuśalamabruvan /
kuśalaṃ te mahābāho sarvatra raghunandana //

Then he bowed before them most reverentially and gave them comfortable seats according to their stature. Those sages seated themselves on those seats most cheerfully after being praised, honoured and worshipped by Sri Ram (14).

When Sri Ram enquired about their well-being, they replied that everything was fine and said, 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Oh the most valiant and valorous one (literally, one with strong arms, or one whose strength of arms was famed, or one who was great in arms—'Mahabaho')! Everything is fine everywhere (15).

दिष्ट्येदानीं प्रपश्यामो हतशत्रुमरिन्दम। न हि भारः स ते राम रावणो राक्षसेश्वरः।। 16।।
सधनुस्त्वं हि लोकांस्त्रीन् विजेतुं शक्त एव हि। दिष्ट्या त्वया हताः सर्वे राक्षसा रावणादयः।। 17।।

diṣṭyedānīṃ prapaśyāmo hataśatrumarindama /
na hi bhāraḥ sa te rāma rāvaṇo rākṣaseśvaraḥ //
sadhanustvaṃ hi lokāṃstrīn vijetaṃ śakta eva hi /
diṣṭyā tvayā hatāḥ sarve rākṣasā rāvaṇādayaḥ //

Oh the vanquisher and destroyer of enemies! We are very fortunate to see that you are without any enemy or opposition today. Oh Sri Ram! The king of demons, Ravana, was not a great burden (problem) for you to eliminate or overcome (16) because once you lift your bow, you can conquer the 3 worlds (consisting of the heaven, the earth and the nether worlds). It is nevertheless fortunate for us that you have killed Ravana and all other demons (17).

सह्यमेतन्महाबाहो रावणस्य निबर्हणम्। असह्यमेतत्सम्प्राप्तं रावणेर्यन्निषूदनम्।। 18।।
अन्तकप्रतिमाः सर्वे कुम्भकर्णादयो मृधे। अन्तकप्रतिमैर्बाणैर्हतास्ते रघुसत्तम।। 19।।

sahyametanmahābāho rāvaṇasya nibarhaṇam /
asahyametatsamprāptaṃ rāvaṇeryanniṣūdanam //
antakapratimāḥ sarve kumbhakarṇādayo mṛdhe /
antakapratimairbāṇairhatāste raghusattama //

And oh the brave, great and courageous one with strong arms! It was comparatively easy for you to kill Ravana than to get rid of his son (Meghnad) which was a very difficult task (18). These Kumbhakarn

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and other demons were like death itself personified; they were literally like an image of 'the end' or 'doomsday'. Oh the best amongst the Raghus! All of them were killed by your arrows which were as fierce, potent and irrevocable as death itself (19).

[Note :—See also Lanka Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 56-58.]

दत्ता चेयं त्वयास्माकं पुरा ह्यभयदक्षिणा। हत्वा रक्षोगणान्सङ्ख्ये कृतकृत्योऽद्य जीवसि।। 20।।
श्रुत्वा तु भाषितं तेषां मुनीनां भावितात्मनाम्। विस्मयं परमं गत्वा रामः प्राञ्जलिरब्रवीत्।। 21।।
रावणादीनतिक्रम्य कुम्भकर्णादिराक्षसान्। त्रिलोकजयिनो हित्वा किं प्रशंसथ रावणिम्।। 22।।
ततस्तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा राघवस्य महात्मनः। कुम्भयोनिर्महातेजा रामं प्रीत्या वचोऽब्रवीत्।। 23।।

dattvā ceyaṃ tvayāsmākaṃ purā hyabhayadakṣiṇā /
hatvā rakṣogaṇānsaṅkhye kṛtakṛtyo'dya jīvasi //
śrutvā tu bhaṣitaṃ teṣāṃ muninām bhāvitātmanām /
vismayaṃ paramaṃ gatvā rāmaḥ prāñjalirabravīt //
rāvaṇādīnatikramya kumbhakarṇādirākṣasān /
trilokajayino hitvā kiṃ praśaṃsatha rāvaṇim //
tatastadvacanaṃ śrutvā rāghavasya mahātmanaḥ /
kumbhayonirmahātejā rāmaṃ prītyā vaco'bravīt //

You had already blessed us with the boon of fearlessness. Now since you have killed these savage demons, you feel fully satisfied, pleased and thankful in this life as a consequence. [Pleased and thankful because you have been able to keep the promise you had made to the earth, the Gods and to us the sages that you shall very soon get rid of the demons and eliminate the cause of all-round troubles and miseries for us, and satisfied because you have provided these demons what they deserved by virtue of getting themselves killed at your hands, that is emancipation and salvation.]' (20). Hearing these words of those wise and enlightened saints, sages and seers, Sri Ram was astonished. He asked them with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of respect and submission, 'Oh sages! Why do you praise Ravana's son (Meghnad) instead of Ravana, who had conquered the three worlds, and Kumbhakarn and other demons? (What is the reason for your praises for Meghnad and what is the mystery behind it?)' (21-22).

Hearing these words of enquiry from the great Raghav (Sri Ram), the most radiant and glorious sage Agastya said most affectionately (23)—

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[Note :—Sage Agastya is called the 'one born out of a pitcher' (कुम्भयोनि) because he was born out of a mud pot.]

श्रृणु राम यथा वृत्तं रावणे रावणस्य च। जन्म कर्म वरादानं सङ्क्षेपाद्वदतो मम।। 24।।
पुरा कृतयुगे राम पुलस्त्यो ब्रह्मणः सुतः। तपस्तप्तुं गतो विद्वान्मेरोः पार्श्वं महामतिः।। 25।।

śṛṇu rāma yathā vṛttaṃ rāvaṇe rāvaṇasya ca/
janma karma varādānaṃ saṅkṣepādvadato mama//
purā kṛtayuge rāma pulastyo brahmaṇaḥ sutaḥ/
tapastaptuṃ gato vidvānmeroḥ pārśvaṃ mahāmatiḥ//

Oh Sri Ram! Listen to the story of Ravana and his son's birth, their deeds, boons etc. I shall describe them to you in brief (24).

Oh Sri Ram! In some previous era called Krityug or Satyug, a Brahmin's son named Pulastya, who was scholarly, wise and erudite, went to the Sumeru mountain to do severe Tapa (austerities, penances) (25).

तृणबिन्दोराश्रमेऽसौ न्यवसन्मुनिपुङ्गवः। तपस्तेपे महातेजाः स्वाध्यायनिरतः सदा।। 26।।
तत्राश्रमे महारम्ये देवगन्धर्वकन्यकाः। गायन्त्यो ननृतुस्तत्र हसन्त्यो वादयन्ति च।। 27।।
पुलस्त्यस्य तपोविघ्नं चक्रुः सर्वा अनिन्दिताः। ततः क्रुद्धो महातेजा व्याजहार वचो महत्।। 28।।

tṛṇabindorāśrame'sau nyavasanmunipuṅgavaḥ/
tapastepe mahātejāḥ svādhyāyaniratah sadā//
tatrāśrame mahāramye devagandharvakanyakāḥ/
gāyantyo nanṛtustatra hasantyo vādayanti ca//
pulastyasya tapovighnaṃ cakruḥ sarvā aninditāḥ/
tataḥ kruddho mahātejā vyājahāra vaco mahat//

That most exalted and glorious saint took up residence in a humble thatched hut of sage Trinabindu and constantly involved himself in self study (i.e. devoted his time and attention in contemplating upon the pure consciousness or pure self and always thought of it; he remained engrossed in contemplating upon the OM and repeating the divine Mantras incessantly; it also implies self-study of scriptures and experimenting with their pronouncements to arrive at the truth) and did severe penances and observed austerities (26).

In that most attractive and pleasant hermitage, the maidens/ damsels of the Gods and Gandharvas (celestial musicians) frolicked around, singing, playing, prancing, dancing, laughing, playing musical instruments and generally making merry of themselves (27). This

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created disturbance in the serene and austere life led by sage Pulastya and in the penances that he used to do, so he became very annoyed, angry and peeved by their deeds. He said wrathfully (28)—

या मे दृष्टिपथं गच्छेत्सा गर्भं धारयिष्यति। ताः सर्वाः शापसंविग्ना न तं देशं प्रचक्रमुः।। 29।।
तृणबिन्दोस्तु राजर्षेः कन्या तन्नाशृणोद्वचः। विचचार मुनेरग्रे निर्भया तं प्रपश्यती।। 30।।

yā me dṛṣṭipathaṃ gacchetsā garbhaṃ dhārayiṣyati /
tāḥ sarvāḥ śāpasaṃvignā na taṃ deśaṃ pracakramuḥ //
tṛṇabindostu rājarṣeḥ kanyā tannāśṛṇodvacaḥ /
vicacāra muneragre nirbhayā taṃ prapaśyatī //

'If my sight falls on anyone of you girls, whosoever she might be shall become pregnant'. Becoming scared at this blanket curse, none of them dared again to go near that hermitage (29). But, as it happened, the most exalted sage (literally, the king among sages) Trinabindu's daughter did not hear it. As a result, she roamed and frolicked about fearlessly glancing at the sage (Pulastya) off and on (30).

बभूव पाण्डुरतनुर्व्यञ्जितान्तःशरीरजा। दृष्ट्वा सा देहवैवर्ण्यं भीता पितरमन्वगात्।। 31।।
तृणबिन्दुश्च तां दृष्ट्वा राजर्षिरमितद्युतिः। ध्यात्वा मुनिकृतं सर्वमवैद्विज्ञानचक्षुषा।। 32।।

babhūva pāṇḍuratanurvyañjitāntaḥśarīrajā /
dṛṣṭvā sā dehavaivarṇyaṃ bhītā pitaramanvagāt //
tṛṇabinduśca tāṃ dṛṣṭvā rājarṣiramitadyutiḥ /
dhyātvā munikṛtaṃ sarvamavaidvijñānacakṣuṣā //

Because of the curse, she became pregnant and turned yellowish in complexion, and her breasts developed into prominence. Seeing her body acquiring unconventional shape and colour, she went near her father most hesitantly and overcome with fear (31). When Trinbindu, who was the most exalted and like a wise king amongst the sages, saw her, he was aghast and realised through his enlightened, penetrating sight of wisdom and insight all that has happened, i.e. he became aware of all the deeds done by Pulastya (32).

तां कन्यां मुनिवर्याय पुलस्त्याय ददौ पिता। तां प्रगृह्याब्रवीत्कन्यां बाढमित्येव स द्विजः।। 33।।
शुश्रूषणपरां दृष्ट्वा मुनिः प्रीतोऽब्रवीद्वचः। दास्यामि पुत्रमेकं ते उभयोर्वंशवर्धनम्।। 34।।

tāṃ kanyāṃ munivaryāya pulastyāya dadau pitā /
tāṃ pragṛhyābravītkanyāṃ bāḍhamityeva sa dvijaḥ //
śuśrūṣaṇaparāṃ dṛṣṭvā muniḥ prīto'bravīdvacaḥ /
dāsyāmi putramekaṃ te ubhayorvaṃśavardhanam //

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Father Trinabindu gave that girl (in marriage) to sage Pulastya and the latter accepted her (33).

Seeing that she diligently, sincerely and devotedly served him, the sage (Pulastya) was very pleased with her and told her, 'I shall bless you with a son who shall enhance the glory and fame of both the clans (i.e. the clan of your father as well as that of your husband)' (34).

ततः प्रासूत सा पुत्रं पुलस्त्याल्लोकविश्रुतम्। विश्रवा इति विख्यातः पौलस्त्यो ब्रह्मविन्मुनिः ।। 35 ।।
तस्य शीलादिकं दृष्ट्वा भरद्वाजो महामुनिः। भार्यार्थं स्वां दुहितरं ददौ विश्रवसे मुदा ।। 36 ।।

tataḥ prāsūta sā putraṃ pulastyāllokaviśrutam /
viśravā iti vikhyātaḥ paulastyo brahmavinmuniḥ //
tasya śīlādikaṃ dṛṣṭvā bharadvājo mahāmuniḥ /
bhāryārthaṃ svāṃ duhitaraṃ dadau viśravase mudā //

In due course, that girl brought forth (i.e. gave birth to) a son who became famous in the three worlds by the name of Visrawa, the son of Pulastya, and he grew up to become expert in wisdom and knowledge pertaining to Brahm, the macrocosmic supreme Soul or pure consciousness in the creation (35).

Observing the most courteous temperament, civilized manners and righteous demeanors of Visrawa, sage Bharadwaj was pleased with him and he gave his daughter to him in marriage (36).

तस्यां तु पुत्रः सञ्ज्ञे पौलस्त्याल्लोकसम्मतः। पितृतुल्यो वैश्रवणो ब्रह्मणा चानुमोदितः ।। 37 ।।
ददौ तत्तपसा तुष्टो ब्रह्मा तस्मै वरं शुभम्। मनोऽभिलषितं तस्य धनेशत्वमखण्डितम् ।। 38 ।।

tasyāṃ tu putraḥ sañjajñe paulastyāllokasammataḥ /
pitṛtulyo vaiśravaṇo brahmaṇā cānumoditaḥ //
dadau tattapasā tuṣṭo brahmā tasmai varaṃ śubham /
mano'bhilaṣitaṃ tasya dhaneśatvamakhaṇḍitam //

Out of her, the son of Pulastya (i.e. Visrawa) produced a son who was famed in the three worlds. That son (Kuber) was famous, renowned and wise like his father Visrawa and was even praised by Lord Brahma (37). The latter was much pleased by his severe penances and austerities, and as a boon bestowed him with perpetual, unchallenged, continuous and endless lordship over prosperity, wealth, pomp, grandeur and majesty (in the whole world) (38).

ततो लब्धवरः सोऽपि पितरं द्रष्टुमागतः। पुष्पकेण धनाध्यक्षो ब्रह्मदत्तेन भास्वता ।। 39 ।।
नमस्कृत्याथ पितरं निवेद्य तपसः फलम्। प्राह मे भगवान् ब्रह्मा दत्त्वा वरमनिन्दितम् ।। 40 ।।

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tato labdhavaraḥ so'pi pitaraṃ draṣṭumāgataḥ /
puṣpakeṇa dhanādhyakṣo brahmadattena bhāsvatā //
namaskṛtyātha pitaraṃ nivedya tapasaḥ phalam /
prāha me bhagavān brahmā dattvā varamaninditam //

Having acquired the Lordship over wealth and prosperity due to Brahma's boon, he boarded the most fantastic, magnificent and splendorous plane called Pushpak also given to him by Brahma, and came to visit his father (39).

He bowed before his father and told him about the reward for his doing severe penances. He said, 'Lord Brahma (the creator) has blessed me with this excellent boon (40).

निवासाय न मे स्थानं दत्तवान्परमेश्वरः। ब्रूहि मे नियतं स्थानं हिंसा यत्र न कस्यचित्।।41।।
विश्रवा अपि तं प्राह लङ्कानाम पुरी शुभा। राक्षसानां निवासाय निर्मिता विश्वकर्मणा।।42।।

nivāsāya na me sthānaṃ dattavānparameśvaraḥ /
brūhi me niyataṃ sthānaṃ hiṃsā yatra na kasyacit //
viśravā api taṃ prāha laṅkānāma purī śubhā /
rākṣasānāṃ nivāsāya nirmitā viśvakarmaṇā //

But (the problem is that) the Lord (i.e. Brahma) has not given me a place to live. So, do tell me a place where I can stay without causing any sort of harm to anybody' (41).

Visrawa replied, 'Vishwakarma has established (i.e. created; conceived, planned and developed) a city called Lanka for the residence of demons (42).

[Note—Vishwakarma is the architect and smith for the Gods.]

त्यक्त्वा विष्णुभयाद्दैत्या विविशुस्ते रसातलम्। सा पुरी दुष्प्रधर्षान्यैर्मध्येसागरमास्थिता।।43।।
तत्र वासाय गच्छ त्वं नान्यैः साधिष्ठिता पुरा। पित्रादिष्टस्त्वसौ गत्वा तां पुरीं धनदोऽविशत्।।44।।

tyaktvā viṣṇubhayāddaityā viviśuste rasātalam /
sā purī duṣpradharṣānyairmadhyesāgaramāsthitā //
tatra vāsāya gaccha tvaṃ nānyaiḥ sādhiṣṭhitā purā /
pitrādiṣṭastvasau gatvā tāṃ purīṃ dhanado'viśat //

But the demons have abandoned it due to the fear of Lord Vishnu's wrath and have shifted to the nether world. That city cannot be easily attacked by any enemy because it is situated in the middle of the ocean (43). You go and live there. No one has previously occupied and has

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had Lordship over it'. Then, on the orders of his father, the Lord of wealth (i.e. Kuber) went to that city (44).

स तत्र सुचिरं कालमुवास पितृसम्मतः। कस्यचित्त्वथ कालस्य सुमाली नाम राक्षसः॥45॥
रसातलान्मर्त्यलोकं चचार पिशिताशनः। गृहीत्वा तनयां कन्यां साक्षाद्देवीमिव श्रियम्॥46॥

sa tatra suciraṃ kālamuvāsa pitṛsammataḥ/
kasyacittvatha kālasya sumālī nāma rākṣasaḥ//
rasātalānmartyalokaṃ cacāra piśitāśanaḥ/
gṛhitvā tanayāṃ kanyāṃ sākṣāddevīmiva śriyam//

There, with the consent and approval of his father, he lived for a long time. Once, it so happened that a flesh eating demon (an ogre) called Sumali came from the nether world, accompanied by his youthful, virgin and beautiful daughter who was as beautiful as goddess Laxmi, to wander in the terrestrial world (45-46).

अपश्यद्धनदं देवं चरन्तं पुष्पकेण सः। हिताय चिन्तयामास राक्षसानां महामनाः॥47॥
उवाच तनयां तत्र कैकसीं नाम नामतः। वत्से विवाहकालस्ते यौवनं चातिवर्तते॥48॥

apaśyaddhanadaṃ devaṃ carantaṃ puṣpakeṇa saḥ/
hitāya cintayāmāsa rākṣasānāṃ mahāmanāḥ//
uvāca tanayāṃ tatra kaikasīṃ nāma nāmataḥ/
vatse vivāhakālaste yauvanaṃ cātivartate//

He saw God Kuber roaming here and there aboard his plane called Pushpak. The great demon Sumali began to ponder about the future good and welfare of the demon race (47).

He said to his daughter named Kaikasi, 'Oh daughter! The time for your marriage and the days of your youth are passing away in futility (48).

प्रत्याख्यानाच्च भीतैस्त्वं न वरैर्गृह्यसे शुभे। सा त्वं वरय भद्रं ते मुनिं ब्रह्मकुलोद्भवम्॥49॥
स्वयमेव ततः पुत्रा भविष्यन्ति महाबलाः। ईदृशाः सर्वशोभाढ्या धनदेन समाः शुभे॥50॥

pratyākhyānācca bhītaistvaṃ na varairgṛhyase śubhe/
sā tvaṃ varaya bhadraṃ te muniṃ brahmakulodbhavam//
svayameva tataḥ putrā bhaviṣyanti mahābalāḥ/
īdṛśāḥ sarvaśobhāḍhyā dhanadena samāḥ śubhe//

But, oh the auspicious one, no one accepts you because of the fear that you will abandon him. Hence, oh you gentle lady, you should

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take the initiative and go and get yourself betrothed to sage Visrawa who is born in the clan of Brahma (as a Brahmin) (49). Oh the auspicious one! You shall give birth to sons who shall be as majestic, excellent and famous besides being valorous and valiant as the Lord of wealth (Kuber) is himself (because they will have the genes similar to those of Kuber)' (50).

तथेति साश्रमं गत्वा मुनेरग्रे व्यवस्थिता। लिखन्ती भुवमग्रेण पादेनाधोमुखी स्थिता।। 51।।
तामपृच्छन्मुनिः का त्वं कन्यासि वरवर्णिनि। साब्रवीत्प्राञ्जलिर्ब्रह्मन् ध्यानेन ज्ञातुमर्हसि।।52।।

tatheti sāśramaṃ gatvā muneragre vyavasthitā /
likhantī bhuvamagreṇa pādenādhomukhī sthitā //
tāmapṛcchanmuniḥ kā tvaṃ kanyāsi varavarṇini /
sābravītprāñjalirbrahman dhyānena jñātumarhasi //

Saying 'alright', she went and stood in the hermitage of the sage (Visrawa) with bowed (lowered) eyes (i.e. most shyly), and began scratching at the earth nervously with her toe nails (51). The sage asked her, 'Oh the beautiful one! Who are you and whose daughter are you?'

Kaikasi replied with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer, 'Oh Brahmin! You can know everything by your transcendental powers of meditation' (52).

ततो ध्यात्वा मुनिः सर्वं ज्ञात्वा तां प्रत्यभाषत। ज्ञातं तवाभिलषितं मत्तः पुत्रानभीप्ससि।। 53।।
दारुणायां तु वेलायामागतासि सुमध्यमे। अतस्ते दारुणौ पुत्रौ राक्षसौ सम्भविष्यतः।।54।।

tato dhyātvā muniḥ sarvaṃ jñātvā taṃ pratyabhāṣata /
jñātaṃ tavābhilaṣitaṃ mattaḥ putrānabhīpsasi //
dāruṇāyāṃ tu velāyāmāgatāsi sumadhyame /
ataste dāruṇau putrau rākṣasau sambhaviṣyataḥ //

Thereafter, the sage came to know everything about the reason for her visit, and said to her, 'I have understood the purpose of your visit. You desire sons from me (53). But, oh the beautiful one (literally, one with a beautiful waist), you have come at an inappropriate time, as a result of which your sons would be two fierce demons' (54).

साब्रवीन्मुनिशार्दूल त्वत्तोऽप्येवंविधौ सुतौ। तामाह पश्चिमो यस्ते भविष्यति महामतिः।। 55।।
महाभागवतः श्रीमान् रामभक्त्येकतत्परः। इत्युक्ता सा तथा काले सुषुवे दशकन्धरम्।।56।।
रावणं विंशतिभुजं दशशीर्षं सुदारुणम्। तद्क्षोजातमात्रेण चचाल च वसुन्धरा।। 57।।

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sābravīnmuniśārdūla tvatto'pyevaṃvidhau sutau /
tāmāha paścimo yaste bhaviṣyati mahāmatiḥ //
mahābhāgavataḥ śrīmān rāmabhaktyekatatparaḥ /
ityuktā sā tathā kāle suṣuve daśakandharam //
rāvaṇaṃ viṃśatibhujaṃ daśaśīrṣaṃ sudāruṇam /
tadrakṣojātamātreṇa cacāla ca vasundharā //

She was perplexed, aghast and astonished. She asked him, 'Oh the most exalted sage! Should you also bring forth such sons (i.e. is it ever possible that demons are born out of wedlock with an exalted hermit or a sage like you)?'

Then the sage replied to her, 'After them (i.e. after the first two sons), the next (i.e. the third) son produced by you shall be most wise (55), God-fearing, pious and a great devotee of the Lord, famed, honourable and virtuous, and shall be an ardent follower and devotee of Sri Ram, the supreme Lord himself'. In due course of time, she gave birth to the 10-headed and 20-armed ferocious Ravana. As soon as he was born, the earth began to tremble and it shook with fear (56-57).

बभूवुर्नाशहेतूनि निमित्तान्यखिलान्यपि। कुम्भकर्णस्ततो जातो महापर्वतसन्निभः।। 58।।
ततः शूर्पणखा नाम जाता रावणसोदरी। ततो विभीषणो जातः शान्तात्मा सौम्यदर्शनः।।59।।

babhūvurnāśahetūni nimittānyakhilānyapi /
kumbhakarṇastato jāto mahāparvatasannibhaḥ //
tataḥ śūrpaṇakhā nāma jātā rāvaṇasodarī /
tato vibhīṣaṇo jātaḥ śāntātmā saumyadarśanaḥ //

At the time of his birth, all the reasons for the torment and destruction of the world appeared to present themselves (i.e. there were very bad omens portending great trouble for the world). After him was born Kumbhakarn with a colossus body resembling a huge mountain (58). Thereafter was born Ravana's sister Supernakha, and after her followed Vibhishan who was of a calm, peaceful and pious temperament as well as pleasant in his demeanors (59).

[Note :—Verse nos. 48-59 describe how the three brothers were born.]

स्वाध्यायी नियताहारो नित्यकर्मपरायणः। कुम्भकर्णस्तु दुष्टात्मा द्विजान् सन्तुष्टचेतसः।। 60।।
भक्षयन्नृषिसङ्घांश्च विचचारातिदारुणः। रावणोऽपि महासत्त्वो लोकानां भयदायकः।
ववृधे लोकनाशाय ह्यामयो देहिनामिव।।61।।

svādhyāyī niyatāhāro nityakarmaparāyaṇaḥ /
kumbhakarṇastu duṣṭātmā dvijān santuṣṭacetasaḥ //

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bhakṣayannṛuṣisaṅghāśca vicacārātidāruṇaḥ /
rāvaṇo'pi mahāsattvo lokānāṃ bhayadāyakaḥ /
vavṛdhe lokanāśāya hyāmayo dehināmiva //

He (Vibhishan) was contemplative by nature and was always engrossed in self-study, ate little food with restraint (i.e. just enough to survive; he had control over his tongue and the longing for delicacies, and could exercise restrain on his indulgences), and diligently followed the duties assigned to him (i.e. was self-restrained, non-indulgent, diligent, scrupulous, religious and dutiful).

Compared to him, the most evil, wicked and cruel Kumbhakarn recklessly roamed in this world devouring contented and wise Brahmins as well as groups of sages, hermits and mendicants. At the same time, Ravana, who was most valiant and valorous and fear-inspiring, began to rise like a killer disease that kills all (and spares none like a contagious epidemic) in the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds) (60-61).

राम त्वं सकलान्तरस्थमभितो जानासि विज्ञानदृक्
साक्षी सर्वहृदि स्थितो हि परमो नित्योदितो निर्मलः।
त्वं लीलामनुजाकृतिः स्वमहिमन् मायागुणैर्नाज्यसे
लीलार्थं प्रतिचोदितोऽद्य भवता वक्ष्यामि रक्षोद्भवम्।।62।।

rāma tvaṃ sakalāntarasthamabhito jānāsi vijñānadṛk
sākṣī sarvahṛdi sthito hi paramo nityodito nirmalaḥ /
tvaṃ līlāmanujākṛtiḥ svamahiman māyāguṇairnājyase
līlārthaṃ praticodito'dya bhavatā vakṣyāmi rakṣodbhavam //

Oh Sri Ram! You reside in the inner self (i.e. as the soul, the pure consciousness) of all the creatures, and know the inner thoughts of their hearts and minds by the virtue of your powers of wisdom and insight. You stay in the heart of the creature and are a witness to all that is happening around in this world. You are supreme, transcendental and beyond everything. You are eternally enlightened, sagacious, erudite, wise and most exalted. You always remain absolutely uncorrupted and pure. Oh Lord who remains established in your own fame, glories and majesties! You have assumed this (illusionary) human body by your own wish and as a sporting activity by the virtue of your maverick and delusion creating powers called Maya, but you remain unattached and unaffected by the great deluding

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and entrapping powers of Maya. In order to play your role as a human most naturally and skillfully, you have asked me, and that is why I am narrating this story of the birth and the life of the demons to you (though you know it fully well) (62).

जानामि केवलमनन्तमचिन्त्यशक्तिं चिन्मात्रमक्षरमजं विदितात्मतत्त्वम्।
त्वां राम गूढनिजरूपमनुप्रवृत्तो मूढोऽप्यहं भवदनुग्रहतश्चरामि।।63।।

jānāmi kevalamanantamacintyaśaktiṃ
cinmātramakṣaramajaṃ viditātmatattvam /
tvāṃ rāma gūḍhanijarūpamanupravṛtto
mūḍho'pyahaṃ bhavadanugrahataścarāmi //

Oh Sri Ram! I realise (or understand and recognise) you to be the only one of your kind who is without an end or beginning, who is almighty and omnipotent, who is that power and authority that is beyond the reach and comprehension of the mind and intellect, who is nothing but pure consciousness personified that represents wisdom and truthful knowledge, who is imperishable and represented by the divine Word (i.e. the cosmic ethereal sound symbolized by the word OM, which is also called 'Naad', and which is the cosmic sound representing the Supreme Being; this word stands for the supreme transcendental entity called Brahm), who is without a birth or a beginning, and who personifies self realisation and enlightenment.

You keep your true form a secret (by utilizing your deceptive, illusion creating powers called Maya). But remaining wholly preoccupied in remembering your divine form as Sri Ram, I roam about freely in this world by your grace and mercy though I am of a low intellect, unwise and foolish'. [That is, I may not realise that what I see as an ordinary human being is actually the Lord of all creation, but since I have affection for you and serve you in the righteous way that I can, this ignorance of mine does not come in the way of your showing mercy, grace, benevolence and munificence on me. As a result, I move around fearlessly in this world with your protective umbrella always following me. Ignorance and delusions are not able to trap me and cause any consternation and perplexities to me] (63).

एवं वदन्तमिनवंशपवित्रकीर्तिः कुम्भोद्भवं रघुपतिः प्रहसन्बभाषे।
मायाश्रितं सकलमेतदनन्यकत्वान्मत्कीर्तनं जगति पापहरं निबोध।।64।।

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evaṃ vadantaminavaṃśapavitrakīrtiḥ
kumbhodbhavaṃ raghupatiḥ prahasanbabhāṣe /
māyāśriyaṃ sakalametadananyakatvān-
matkīrtanaṃ jagati pāpahāraṃ nibodha //

When sage Agastya had said so, Raghupati (i.e. the Lord of the Raghu's clan, Sri Ram)—who represented the good fame and glory of his clan—said to him smilingly, 'The entire world is illusive because it is not separate or distinct from me. [That is, there is no duality between me and the external world. If anyone, out of ignorance thinks that the world has an independent existence separate from me, then he is mistaken and ill-advised.]

You should regard the singing and narration of my divine glories and virtues, the values that I have stood for and proclaimed, the exemplary examples of conduct and thoughts that I've portrayed, and the various virtues deeds that I've done in this world, as the divine panacea for elimination of all sins and evils and their horrendous consequences in this world' (64).

***

Uttar Kand — Canto 2

Establishment of the Demon Kingdom

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

श्रीरामवचनं श्रुत्वा परमानन्दनिर्भरः। मुनिः प्रोवाच सदसि सर्वेषां तत्र शृण्वताम्।। 1।।
अथ वित्तेश्वरो देवस्तत्र कालेन केनचित्। आययौ पुष्पकारूढः पितरं द्रष्टुमञ्जसा।। 2।।
दृष्ट्वा तं कैकसी तत्र भ्राजमानं महौजसम्। राक्षसी पुत्रसामीप्यं गत्वा रावणमब्रवीत्।। 3।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

śrīrāmavacanaṃ śrutvā paramānandanirbharaḥ /
muniḥ provāca sadasi sarveṣāṃ tatra śṛṇvatām //
atha vitteśvaro devastatra kālena kenacit /
āyayau puṣpakārūḍhaḥ pitaraṃ draṣṭamañjasā //
dṛṣṭvā taṃ kaikasī tatra bhrājamānaṃ mahaujasam /
rākṣasī putrasāmīpyaṃ gatvā rāvaṇamabravīt //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Hearing these words (Canto 1, verse no. 64) of Sri Ram, the sage (Agastya) was very exhilarated and

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resumed his narration while all those assembled there listened (1). 'Once, the Lord of wealth (Kuber) came to meet his father (Viswarva) aboard his plane Pushpak (2).

When the demoness Kaikasi (wife of Viswarva and step mother of Kuber) saw the most glorious one (Kuber) sitting beside his father, she went to her son Ravana and said enviously (3)—

पुत्र पश्य धनाध्यक्षं ज्वलन्तं स्वेन तेजसा। त्वमप्येवं यथा भूयास्तथा यत्नं कुरु प्रभो।।4।।
तच्छ्रुत्वा रावणो रोषात् प्रतिज्ञामकरोद्द्रुतम्। धनदेन समो वापि ह्यधिको वाचिरेण तु।।5।।
भविष्याम्यम्ब मां पश्य सन्तापं त्यज सुव्रते। इत्युक्त्वा दुष्करं कर्तुं तपः स दशकन्धरः।।6।।
अगमत्फलसिद्ध्यर्थं गोकर्णं तु सहानुजः। स्वं स्वं नियममास्थाय भ्रातरस्ते तपो महत्।।7।।
आस्थिता दुष्करं घोरं सर्वलोकैकतापनम्। दशवर्षसहस्राणि कुम्भकर्णोऽकरोत्तपः।।8।।

putra paśya dhanādhyakṣaṃ jvalantaṃ svena tejasā /
tvamapyevaṃ yathā bhūyāstathā yatnaṃ kuru prabho //
tacchrutvā rāvaṇo roṣāt pratijñāmakaroddrutam /
dhanadena samo vāpi hyādhiko vācireṇa tu //
bhaviṣyāmyamba māṃ paśya santāpaṃ tyaja suvrate /
ityuktvā duṣkaraṃ kartuṃ tapaḥ sa daśakandharaḥ //
agamatphalasiddhyarthaṃ gokarṇaṃ tu sahānujaḥ /
svaṃ svaṃ niyamamāsthāya bhrātaraste tapo mahat //
āsthitā duṣkaraṃ ghoraṃ sarvalokaikatāpanam /
daśavarṣasahasrāṇi kumbhkarṇo'karottapaḥ //

'Oh son! Look at this Lord of wealth who is all aglow with his own radiance and glory. So, oh the great one, you must also attempt to do similar things as he has done so as to become similarly glorious and famous' (4).

Hearing this, Ravana became offended, irritated and jealous, and he made a haughty vow, 'Oh the one with auspicious aspirations! Do not have any regrets, just wait and watch. Oh mother! I shall soon, in the very near future, become equal to or even more famous, majestic and powerful than Kuber'.

Saying this, Ravana along with his younger brothers (Kumbhakarn and Vibhishan) went to a place called 'Gaukarna' to do severe penances and austerities to acquire desired boons (or rewards; fulfillment of their desires). Once there, the three brothers individually became involved in doing most severe, determined and unwavering penances, making and living their separate vows stoutly. That 'Tapa' was so

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severe and stern that it could virtually roast the whole world by its severity. Out of the three, Kumbhakarn did Tapa for 10 thousand years (5-8).

विभीषणोऽपि धर्मात्मा सत्यधर्मपरायणः। पञ्चवर्षसहस्राणि पादेनैकेन तस्थिवान्।।9।।
दिव्यवर्षसहस्रं तु निराहारो दशाननः। पूर्णे वर्षसहस्रे तु शीर्षमग्नौ जुहाव सः।
एवं वर्षसहस्राणि नव तस्यातिचक्रमुः।।10।।

vibhīṣaṇo'pi dharmātmā satyadharmaparāyaṇaḥ/
pañcavarṣasahasrāṇi pādenaikena tasthivān//
divyavarṣasahasraṃ tu nirāhāro daśānanaḥ/
pūrṇe varṣasahasre tu śīrṣamagnau jujāva saḥ/
evaṃ varṣasahasrāṇi nava tasyāticakramuḥ//

Vibhishan—who was most righteous, pious and a follower of the noble path of truth and virtuousness—did Tapa for five thousand years by standing on one foot (9).

Ravana, the 10-headed one, fasted for one thousand glorious years. Then, on the completion of the thousand years, he offered his own head as offering to the sacred fire. In a similar manner, he repeated the entire exercise nine more times and, as a result, nine thousand years passed by (10).

अथ वर्षसहस्रं तु दशमे दशमं शिरः। छेत्तुकामस्य धर्मात्मा प्राप्तश्चाथ प्रजापतिः।
वत्स वत्स दशग्रीव प्रीतोऽस्मीत्यभ्यभाषत।।11।।
वरं वरय दास्यामि यत्ते मनसि काङ्क्षितम्। दशग्रीवोऽपि तच्छ्रुत्वा प्रहृष्टेनान्तरात्मना।।12।।

atha varṣasahasraṃ tu daśame daśamaṃ śiraḥ/
cettukāmasya dharmātmā prāptaścātha prajāpatiḥ/
vatsa vatsa daśagrīva prīto'smītyabhyabhāṣata//
varaṃ varaya dāsyāmi yatte manasi kāṅkṣitam/
daśagrīvo'pi tacchrutvā prahṛṣṭenāntarātmanā//

When the tenth thousand year was about to end and Ravana was ready to offer his last head, the righteous guardian of the world, Prajapati Brahma (the manifestation of the supreme cosmic transcendental creator Brahm, in the form of Brahma, the creator), revealed his own self and said, 'Oh son! I am pleased with you! (11). Ask for a boon that you desire! I shall give you whatever you wish for'. Hearing this, the 10-headed Ravana said most delightfully (12)—

अमरत्वं वृणोमीश वरदो यदि मे भवान्। सुपर्णनागयक्षाणां देवतानां तथासुरैः।
अवध्यत्वं तु मे देहि तृणभूता हि मानुषाः।।13।।

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तथास्त्विति प्रजाध्यक्षः पुनराह दशाननम्। अग्नौ हुतानि शीर्षाणि यानि तेऽसुरपुङ्गव।।14।।
भविष्यन्ति यथापूर्वमक्षयाणि च सत्तम।।15।।

amaratvaṃ vṛṇomīśa varado yadi me bhavān/
suparṇanāgayakṣāṇāṃ devatānāṃ tathāsuraiḥ/
avadhyatvaṃ tu me dehi tṛṇabhūtā hi mānuṣāḥ//
tathāstviti prajādhyakṣaḥ punarāha daśānanam/
agnau hutāni śīrṣāṇi yāni te'surapuṅgava//
bhaviṣyati yathāpūrvamakṣayāṇi ca sattama//

'Oh Lord! If you indeed wish to grant me the desired boon, then I want immortality. I must not die at the hands of Garuda (the mount of Vishnu; the legendary bird eagle), serpents (the legendary Sheshnath), Yaksha (demigods employed by Kuber as his guards), Gods and demons (i.e. the other inhabitants of the nether world from where his mother Kaikasi had come; here, referring to other demons who might claims their share in the plunder). The poor humans are like a reed or blade of grass for me (i.e. I have no fear from them!)' (13).

Then the Lord of his subjects (i.e. Brahma) said 'So be it'. He continued to talk with the 10-headed one and said, 'Oh the best among the demons! All the nine heads that you had offered to the sacred fire shall grow once again, and oh the honourable one, they can never be destroyed again' (14-15).

[Note to verse no. 13 :—This over confidence of Ravana that he has nothing to fear from humans proved to be his undoing. There is a lesson to be learnt here—that over enthusiasm, over confidence, over belligerence, over haughtiness and arrogance is more often than not the so-called weak link in the chain. It is the point where the chain will snap when it is most unexpected or undesired. Please see verse no. 56 of this Canto also.]

एवमुक्त्वा ततो राम दशग्रीवं प्रजापतिः। विभीषणमुवाचेदं प्रणतं भक्तवत्सलः।।16।।
विभीषण त्वया वत्स कृतं धर्मार्थमुत्तमम्। तपस्ततो वरं वत्स वृणीष्वाभिमतं हितम्।।17।।

evamuktvā tato rāma daśagrīvaṃ prajāpatiḥ/
vibhīṣaṇamuvācedaṃ praṇataṃ bhaktavatsalaḥ//
vibhīṣaṇa tvayā vatsa kṛtaṃ dharmārthamuttamam/
tapastato varaṃ vatsa vṛṇīṣvābhimataṃ hitam//

Oh Sri Ram! Saying this to Ravana, Prajapati (Brahma)—who is most munificent and benevolent towards his devotees—turned to Vibhishan who was most polite and humble (16).

Brahma said, 'Oh son Vibhishan! You have done this Tapa to

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uphold and bolster the qualities of probity, propriety and righteousness in the demon clan. Hence, oh son, you may ask for whatever boon you desire' (17).

विभीषणोऽपि तं नत्वा प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत्। देव मे सर्वदा बुद्धिर्धर्मे तिष्ठतु शाश्वती।
मा रोचयत्वधर्मं मे बुद्धिः सर्वत्र सर्वदा।।18।।
ततः प्रजापतिः प्रीतो विभीषणमथाब्रवीत्। वत्स त्वं धर्मशीलोऽसि तथैव च भविष्यसि।।19।।

vibhīṣaṇo'pi taṃ natvā prāñjalirvākyamabravīt /
deva me sarvadā buddhirdharme tiṣṭhatu śāśvatī /
mā rocayatvadharmaṃ me buddhiḥ sarvatra sarvadā //
tataḥ prajāpatiḥ prīto vibhīṣaṇamathābravīt /
vatsa tvaṃ dharmaśilo'si tathaiva ca bhaviṣyasi //

Vibhishan bowed humbly before him and said with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer, 'Oh Lord! Let my mind-intellect-discrimination faculty steadfastly follow the path of nobility, virtuousness, morality and righteousness without any deviation tendencies and corrupting influences (i.e. without ever thinking of deflecting or deviating from it)' (18).

At this, the guardian of his subjects (Brahma) became extremely pleased and said most affectionately to Vibhishan, 'Oh son! You are exemplary in your righteousness and are very virtuous. It shall be as you please (19).

अयाचितोऽपि ते दास्ये ह्यमरत्वं विभीषण। कुम्भकर्णमथोवाच वरं वरय सुव्रत।।20।।
वाण्या व्याप्तोऽथ तं प्राह कुम्भकर्णः पितामहम्।
स्वप्स्यामि देव षण्मासान्दिनमेकं तु भोजनम्।।21।।

ayācito'pi te dāsye hyamaratvaṃ vibhīṣaṇa /
kumbhakarṇamathovāca varaṃ varaya suvrata //
vāṇyā vyāpto'tha taṃ prāha kumbhakarṇaḥ pitāmaham /
svapsyāmi deva ṣaṇmāsāndinamekaṃ tu bhojanam //

Oh Vibhishan! Though you have not asked for it, I nevertheless grant you an additional boon of immortality!'

After that, he (Brahma) said to Kumbhakarn, 'Oh the one with steadfast vows and noble aspirations! Ask for a boon' (20). Then Kumbhakarn, who was under the delusory and misleading spell cast by Saraswati, the goddess of wisdom and speech, said (i.e. was inspired

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by her who acted on the behest of Gods, to ask for an absurd but harmless boon), 'Oh Lord, the supreme father! I want to sleep for a continuous period of six months and eat for one day only' (21).

एवमस्त्विति तं प्राह ब्रह्मा दृष्ट्वा दिवौकसः। सरस्वती च तद्वक्त्रान्निर्गता प्रययौ दिवम्।। 22।।
कुम्भकर्णस्तु दुष्टात्मा चिन्तयामास दुःखितः। अनभिप्रेतमेवास्यात्किं निर्गतमहो विधिः।।23।।

evamastviti taṃ prāha brahmā dṛṣṭvā divaukasaḥ।
sarasavatī ca tadvaktrānnirgatā prayayau divam।।
kumbhakarṇastu duṣṭātmā cintayāmāsa duḥkhitaḥ।
anabhipretamevāsyātkiṃ nirgatamaho vidhiḥ।।

Brahma said to him while glancing obliquely (askance) at the Gods (who were closely watching the proceedings, and at whose behest Saraswati had misled Kumbhakarn in asking for the above ridiculous boon), 'So be it'. As soon as he said so, goddess Saraswati left his (Kumbhakarn's) mouth (i.e. his tongue) and went to the heavens (22).

The wicked and evil Kumbhakarn realised his mistake (that he has been taken, literally, for a ride by the Gods, and he hadn't asked for any worthwhile boon) and became extremely worried and remorseful. He regretted—'Alas! Look at the misfortune! How did these words (as asked by him in verse 21) come out from my mouth though I had never desired for such a funny, incredulous and absurd boon?' (23).

सुमाली वरलब्धांस्तान् ज्ञात्वा पौत्रान् निशाचरान्।
पातालान्निर्भयः प्रायात् प्रहस्तादिभिरन्वितः।।24।।
दशग्रीवं परिष्वज्य वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्। दिष्ट्या ते पुत्र संवृत्तो वाञ्छितो मे मनोरथः।।25।।

sumālī varalabdhāṃstān jñātvā pautrān niśācarān।
pātālānnirbhayaḥ prāyāt prahastādibhiranvitaḥ।।
daśagrīvaṃ pariṣvajya vacanaṃ cedamabravīt।
diṣṭyā te putra saṃvṛto vāñchito me manorathaḥ।।

Hearing that his three grandsons have received boons, the demon Sumali came out of the nether world fearlessly, accompanied by Prahast and other demons (24).

He embraced the 10-headed one (Ravana) and said, 'Oh son! It is very fortunate and a moment of great joy and celebration that your desires have been fulfilled in accordance with my wishes (25).

यद्भयाच्च वयं लङ्कां त्यक्त्वा याता रसातलम्। तद्गतं नो महाबाहो महद्विष्णुकृतं भयम्।। 26।।

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अस्माभिः पूर्वमुषिता लङ्केयं धनदेन ते। भ्रात्राक्रान्तामिदानीं त्वं प्रत्यानेतुमिहार्हसि।। 27।।
साम्ना वाथ बलेनापि राज्ञां बन्धुः कुतः सुहृत्। इत्युक्तो रावणः प्राह नार्हस्येवं प्रभाषितुम्।। 28।।

yadbhayācca vayaṃ laṅkāṃ tyaktvā yātā rasātalam /
tadgataṃ no mahābāho mahadviṣṇukṛtaṃ bhayam //
asmābhiḥ pūrvamuṣitā laṅkeyaṃ dhanadena te /
bhrātrākrāntāmidānīṃ tvaṃ pratyānetumihārhasi //
sāmnā vātha balenāpi rājñāṃ bandhuḥ kutaḥ suhṛt /
ityukto rāvaṇaṃ prāha nārhasyevaṃ prabhāṣitum //

By the fear of whom we had abandoned (i.e. deserted and escaped from) Lanka and had gone to the nether world, oh the brave, strong and courageous one, that fear of Vishnu no longer exists (26). This city of Lanka, which is presently under the control of your step-brother Kuber, was previously inhabited by us. Now you should take it back from him either by mutual understanding (compromise) or by force (i.e. you should not allow the relationship of a brother come in the way of establishing yourself as a Lord of the city) (27) because family members and relatives (i.e. kiths and kin) of kings have never been their well-wishers'. [That is, the greatest fear the king faces is jealousy and envy from his next of kin who are, more often than not, scheming and plotting against the king to grab the crown, powers that come with it, and enjoy the spoils that are a part and parcel of kinghood.] When Sumali had said tried to instigate him, Ravana replied, 'You must not say so! (28).

वित्तेशो गुरुरस्माकमेवं श्रुत्वा तमब्रवीत्। प्रहस्तः प्रश्रितं वाक्यं रावणं दशकन्धरम्।। 29।।
शृणु रावण यत्नेन नैवं त्वं वक्तुमर्हसि। नाधीता राजधर्मास्ते नीतिशास्त्रं तथैव च।। 30।।

vitteśo gururasmākamevaṃ śrutvā tamabravīt /
prahastaḥ praśritaṃ vākyaṃ rāvaṇaṃ daśakandharam //
śṛṇu rāvaṇa yatnena naivaṃ tvaṃ vaktumarhasi /
nādhītā rājadharmāste nītiśāstraṃ tathaiva ca //

The Lord of wealth (Kuber) is our elder brother'. Hearing this, Prahast (the demon who had accompanied Sumali from the nether world, see verse no. 24) said most politely (29), 'Oh Ravana! Listen carefully what I have to say. You must not say such a thing. You have not studied the science of politics and kinghood (30).

[Note—The noteworthy point here is that Ravana had a noble set of mind, and was not inherently wicked, pervert and unscrupulous, wishing to

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usurp power and right of others, as he has even chided his own maternal grandfather when he was incited to rebel against his elder brother, though he was a step brother. This shows that one half of the genes that he had from his father's side were dominant him at this point of time. It was the ill-advice given by his own kinsmen—his maternal grandfather Sumali and his confidante Prahast—that led him astray. The lesson here is that all creatures are inherently good and noble. It is their advisors—whether teachers, parents, guides, elders, compatriots and peers etc.—who can either make a devil/Satan or a holy spirit out of them. Presently, the evil advice had the better of him, and greed and jealousy took hold of him eventually.

We should also consider his stunned response at being instigated against Kuber when we go through the text of this Ramayan, when on every occasion when he was being persuaded to abandon his animosity and belligerence against Lord Ram and seek a compromise, he had sternly refused, openly saying that he knows who Ram is and he would not let go this golden opportunity for emancipation and salvation by getting killed at the hands of the Lord, a privilege not even the noble sages and seers could avail of. He had, on many occasions, preached on spirituality and metaphysics, something not expected from a person who is evil and pervert internally. So, Ravana was a victim of circumstances, as it was, for left to himself he was a noble soul who unfortunately allowed himself to believe evil advisors and fall into a trap of sins from which he just could not extricate himself. Since worldly things do indeed provide physical comforts and pleasures of the senses, once fallen into the honey trap he found it so enchanting that he wished to enjoy it to the best of his ability for the time being and wait for such niceties as spiritual liberation and deliverance for some later time!

This verse also shows that, contrary to popular belief, sometimes even one's own close relatives become enemies in the sense that they give wrong advice that becomes a thorn for the person. So it is always better to think for one's own self and follow the advice given by the sub-conscious because the supreme Brahm resides in the heart of all the creatures as their Atma residing in their bosom as their consciousness, and which is called the 'inner voice' can never mislead a creature.

शूराणां नहि सौभ्रात्रं शृणु मे वदतः प्रभो। कश्यपस्य सुता देवा राक्षसाश्च महाबलाः॥ 31॥
परस्परमयुध्यन्त त्यक्त्वा सौहृदमायुधैः। नैवेदानीन्तनं राजन् वैरं देवैरनुष्ठितम्॥ 32॥

śūrāṇāṃ nahi saubhrātraṃ śṛṇu me vadataḥ prabho /
kaśyapasya sutā devā rākṣasāśca mahābalāḥ //
parasparamayudhyanta tyaktvā sauhṛdamāyudhaiḥ /
naivedānīntanaṃ rājan vairaṃ devairanuṣṭhitam //

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There is no sense of brotherhood (or affectionate emotions of being the brother of the other person) between brave warriors (who are contenders for superiority). Oh Lord! Listen to what I have to submit on this subject. The exalted sage Kashyap's sons, the Gods and the demons, were very brave, strong and courageous (31). But (inspite of their being brothers), they viciously fought each other, having abandoned their affection and fraternity. [That is, though they were related by blood, but when it came to self interest, they were baying for each other's blood and each demanding the other's skull, as it were.] Oh king! The animosity and hatred that we (the demons) have with the Gods is not something new (for it is well entrenched and ancient)' (32).

प्रहस्तस्य वचः श्रुत्वा दशग्रीवो दुरात्मनः। तथेति क्रोधताम्राक्षस्त्रिकूटाचलमन्वगात्।। 33।।
दूतं प्रहस्तं सम्प्रेष्य निष्कास्य धनदेश्वरम्। लङ्कामाक्रम्य सचिवै राक्षसैः सुखमास्थितः।।34।।

prahastasya vacaḥ śrutvā daśagrīvo durātmanaḥ/
tatheti krodhatāmrākṣastrikūṭācalamanvagāt//
dūtaṃ prahastaṃ sampreṣya niṣkāya dhanadeśvaram/
laṅkāmākramya sacivai rākṣasaiḥ sukhamāsthitaḥ//

Hearing these (instigating and ill advised) words of the wicked, scheming and pervert Prahast, the 10-headed Ravana said (angrily and haughtily), 'It's alright then!' His eyes became red with anger and he immediately reached the Trikoot mountain (on which Lanka was established) (33). He sent Prahast as his messenger, ejected the Lord of wealth (Kuber) from Lanka, and having snatched (usurped) the city from him, he established his control over it. He lived happily and in comfort there with his demon ministers and others (34).

धनदः पितृवाक्येन त्यक्त्वा लङ्कां महायशाः। गत्वा कैलासशिखरं तपसातोषयच्छिवम्।। 35।।
तेन सख्यमनुप्राप्य तेनैव परिपालितः।। अलकां नगरीं तत्र निर्ममे विश्वकर्मणा।। 36।।

dhanadaḥ pitṛvākyena tyaktvā laṅkāṃ mahāyaśāḥ/
gatvā kailāsaśikharaṃ tapasātoṣayacchivam//
tena sakhyamanuprāpya tenaiva paripālitaḥ/
alakāṃ nagarīṃ tatra nirmame viśvakarmaṇā//

The most famous and virtuous Lord of wealth (Kuber) abandoned Lanka and on the advise of his father, he went to Kailash (the mountainous abode of Lord Shiva) and pleased the Lord (Shiva) by doing severe penances (35). He established cordial relationship with

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Lord Shiva and, protected by the latter, he got established for himself a city called 'Alkapuri' with the help of the celestial architect Vishwakarma (36).

दिक्पालत्वं चकारात्र शिवेन परिपालितः। रावणो राक्षसैः सार्धमभिषिक्तः सहानुजैः।।37।।
राज्यं चकारासुराणां त्रिलोकीं बाधयन् खलः। भगिनीं कालखञ्जाय ददौ विकटरूपिणीम्।।38।।
विद्युज्जिह्वाय नाम्नासौ महामायी निशाचरः। ततो मयो विश्वकर्मा राक्षसानां दितेः सुतः।।39।।
सुतां मन्दोदरीं नाम्ना ददौ लोकैकसुन्दरीम्। रावणाय पुनः शक्तिममोघां प्रीतिमानसः।।40।।

dikpālatvaṃ cakārātra śivena paripālitaḥ/
rāvaṇo rākṣasaiḥ sārdhamabhiṣiktaḥ sahānujaiḥ//
rājyaṃ cakārāsurāṇāṃ trilokīṃ bādhayan khalaḥ/
bhaginīṃ kālakhañjāya dadau vikaṭarūpiṇīm//
vidyujjihvāya nāmnāsau mahāmayī niśācaraḥ/
tato mayo viśvakarmā rākṣasānāṃ diteḥ sutaḥ//
sutāṃ mandodarīṃ nāmnā dadau lokaikasundarīm/
rāvaṇāya punaḥ śaktimamoghāṃ prītimānasaḥ//

There, under the protection of Lord Shiva, he became a 'Dikpal' (i.e. one who gets guardianship or lordship over one of the 10 directions of the celestial compass).

Here at Lanka meanwhile, Ravana got himself anointed as the king of demons along with his younger brothers (37). The evil rascal began to rule over the demons and started to unleash his terror in the three worlds. He betrothed his sister (Supernakha), who was of a very fearful and fierce countenance and demeanors, to a great trickster, cunning and most illusive demon named Vidyujiwaha belonging to the clan of demon Kaalkhanja. At that time, Maye, who was the son of Diti and the architect and builder for the demons, gave his daughter named Mandodari—who was the most beautiful maiden in the three worlds—in marriage to Ravana. After that, he (Maye) gave him an invincible and infallible power called 'Shakti' (38-40).

वैरोचनस्य दौहित्रीं वृत्रज्वालेति विश्रुताम्। स्वयंदत्तामुदवहत्कुम्भकर्णाय रावणः।।41।।
गन्धर्वराजस्य सुतां शैलूषस्य महात्मनः। विभीषणस्य भार्यार्थे धर्मज्ञां समुदावहत्।।42।।
सरमां नाम सुभगां सर्वलक्षणसंयुताम्। ततो मन्दोदरी पुत्रं मेघनादमजीजनत्।।43।।

vairocanasya dauhitrīṃ vṛtrajvāleti viśrutām/
svayaṃdattāmudavahatkumbhakarṇāya rāvaṇaḥ//
gandharvarājasya sutāṃ śailūṣasya mahātmanaḥ/
vibhīṣaṇasya bhāryārthe dharmajñāṃ samudāvahat//

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saramāṃ nāma subhagāṃ sarvalakṣaṇasaṃyutām /
tato mandodarī putraṃ meghanādamajījanat //

Thereafter, Ravana married off Kumbhakarna with Vritrajwala, who was the daughter of the son of demon Vairochan and was brought to him (Ravana) by her father himself (41).

Likewise, Sarma—who was the daughter of king of Gandharvas (celestial musicians) named Sailush, who was very righteous and noble, most beautiful, and possessed all the good virtues and characteristics—was betrothed to Vibhishan. In due course of time, Mandodari gave birth to a son called Meghnad (42-43).

[Note :—The Family Tree of Ravana is depicted in a separate chart appended to this Canto.]

जातमात्रस्तु यो नादं मेघवत्प्रमुमोच ह। ततः सर्वेऽब्रुवन्मेघनादोऽयमिति चासकृत्।। 44।।
कुम्भकर्णस्ततः प्राह निद्रा मां बाधते प्रभो। ततश्च कारयामास गुहां दीर्घां सुविस्तराम्।।45।।

jātamātrastu yo nādaṃ meghavatpramumoca ha /
tataḥ sarve'bruvanmeghanādo'yamiti cāsakṛt //
kumbhakarṇastataḥ prāha nidrā māṃ bādhate prabho /
tataśca kārayāmāsa guhāṃ dīrghāṃ suvistarām //

As soon as he (Meghnad) was born, he made a loud noise resembling the rumbling and thunder of clouds. That is why every one said he is 'Meghnad' (which literally means one who makes a noise resembling the thunder of clouds) (44).

Then Kumbhakarn said, 'Oh Lord! I am feeling sleepy'. He got a large cave constructed for himself (so that he can sleep undisturbed) (45).

तत्र सुष्वाप मूढात्मा कुम्भकर्णो विघूर्णितः। निद्रिते कुम्भकर्णे तु रावणो लोकरावणः।। 46।।
ब्राह्मणान् ऋषिमुख्यांश्च देवदानवकिन्नरान्। देवश्रियो मनुष्यांश्च निजघ्ने समहोरगान्।।47।।

tatra suṣvāpa mūḍhātmā kumbhakarṇo vighūrṇitaḥ /
nidrite kumbhakarṇe tu rāvaṇo lokarāvaṇaḥ //
brāhmaṇān ṛṣimukhyāṃśca devadānavakinnarān /
devaśriyo manuṣyāṃśca nijaghne samahoragān //

There (in the cave), the ill-witted, dud and foolish Kumbhakarn slept with a thunderous, resounding snore. When Kumbhakarn fell asleep, Ravana—who literally means one who makes the whole world weep in anguish and feel miserable and distressed—unleashed his

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tyrannical reign by killing Brahmins, chief amongst the sages, hermits, ascetics and seers, Gods, demons (who dared to oppose him), Kinnars [celestial demigods who are dancers and singers], legendary serpents and humans by searching them out in every nook and corner of the world. He also plundered and destroyed the assets of the Gods (46-47).

धनदोऽपि ततः श्रुत्वा रावणस्याक्रमं प्रभुः। अधर्मं मा कुरुष्वेति दूतवाक्यैर्न्यवारयत्।। 48।।
ततः क्रुद्धो दशग्रीवो जगाम धनदालयम्। विनिर्जित्य धनाध्यक्षं जहारोत्तमपुष्पकम्।। 49।।

dhanado'pi tataḥ śrutvā rāvaṇasyākramaṃ prabhuḥ/
adharmaṃ mā kuruṣveti dūtavākyairnyavārayat//
tataḥ kruddho daśagrīvo jagāma dhanadālayam/
vinirjitya dhanādhyakṣaṃ jahārottamapuṣpakam//

When the Lord of wealth (Kuber) heard about Ravana's rash, despotic and tyrannical behaviour, misdeeds and misdemeanors, he was aghast and sent a messenger with the advise that he should not commit sin and unrighteousness (48).

This suggestion annoyed Ravana further and he attacked Kuber's capital (Alkapuri—see verse no. 36) in retaliation and defeated him. As a booty, he snatched the latter's plane called Pushpak (49).

ततो यमं च वरुणं निर्जित्य समरेऽसुरः। स्वर्गलोकमगात्तूर्णं देवराजजिघांसया।। 50।।
ततोऽभवन्महद्युद्धमिन्द्रेण सह दैवतैः। ततो रावणमभ्येत्य बबन्ध त्रिदशेश्वरः।। 51।।

tato yamaṃ ca varuṇaṃ nirjitya samare'suraḥ/
svargalokamagāttūrṇaṃ devarājajighāṃsayā//
tato'bhavanmahadyuddhamindreṇa saha daivataiḥ/
tato rāvaṇamabhyetya babandha tridaśeśvaraḥ//

Soon, that demon (Ravana) conquered Yam (the Lord of death) and Varun (the God of water) and made an assault on the heavens with the intention to kill the king of Gods, Indra himself (50).

There, he fought a very fierce and pitched battle with Indra and other Gods. The king of the three worlds (i.e. Indra) was able to out-maneuver Ravana and put him in shackles (51).

तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसागत्य मेघनादः प्रतापवान्। कृत्वा घोरं महद्युद्धं जित्वा त्रिदशपुङ्गवान्।। 52।।
इन्द्रं गृहीत्वा बध्वासौ मेघनादो महाबलः। मोचयित्वा तु पितरं गृहीत्वेन्द्रं ययौ पुरम्।। 53।।

tacchrutvā sahasāgatya meghanādaḥ pratāpavan/
kṛtvā ghoraṃ mahadyuddhaṃ jitvā tridaśapuṅgavān//

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indraṃ gṛhītvā badhvāsau meghanādo mahābalaḥ /
mocayitvā tu pitaraṃ gṛhītvendraṃ yayau puram //

When the news reached Meghnad, the most famous, powerful and strong son of Ravana, he came to help his father and there was a very pitched and fierce battle between the two sides. He conquered the Gods (52), captured Indra and tied him up. The most strong and valorous Meghnad set free his father and brought Indra as a captive to his capital (at Lanka) (53).

ब्रह्मा तु मोचयामास देवेन्द्रं मेघनादतः। दत्त्वा वरान्बहूंस्तस्मै ब्रह्मा स्वभवनं ययौ।। 54।।
रावणो विजयी लोकान्सर्वान् जित्वा क्रमेण तु। कैलासं तोलयामास बाहुभिः परिघोपमैः।।55।।

brahmā tu mocayāmāsa devendraṃ meghanādataḥ /
tattvā varanbahūṃstasmai brahmā svabhavanaṃ yayau //
rāvaṇo vijayī lokānsarvān jitvākrameṇa tu /
kailāsaṃ tolayāmāsa bāhubhiḥ parighopamaiḥ //

Brahma (the creator) went and bargained for the freedom of Indra from the clutches of Meghnad by granting the latter a number of boons[1]. Having got Indra's freedom, Brahma went back to his abode (54).

The victorious and emboldened Ravana progressively, one after another, conquered all the different Lokas (worlds inhabited by different species or categories of creatures, Gods, demigods etc.). Having done so, he had become so confident of and arrogant about his invincibility, might, prowess, potent, valour and punch that he haughtily lifted Mt. Kailash (the abode of Lord Shiva) with his huge, strong and robust arms which were like huge shovels[2] (55).

[Note to verse no. 54 :—[1]It was a sort of ransom paid by the grandfather Brahma to liberate Indra from the clutches of his vanquisher, Meghnad. This sort of blackmail was one way in which the demons were able to acquire numerous boons and used them to further blackmail the Gods till the latter's complete submission, subjugation and rout.

[2]He scooped up the mountain using his fingers and held it aloft in his palms at the furthest end of his straightened hand which was like a long, sturdy and robust shaft of the shovel. In other words, his hands also resembled a large fork. The handle of the shovel or fork was his forearm and biceps while the fingers and palms resembled the pointed tips of the fork or the pan of the shovel]

तत्र नन्दीश्वरेणैवं शप्तोऽयं राक्षसेश्वरः। वानरैर्मानुषैश्चैव नाशं गच्छेति कोपिना।। 56।।
शप्तोऽप्यगणयन् वाक्यं ययौ हैहयपत्तनम्। तेन बद्धो दशग्रीवः पुलस्त्येन विमोचितः।।57।।

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tatra nandīśvareṇaivaṃ śapto'yaṃ rākṣaseśvaraḥ /
vānarairmānuṣaiścaiva nāśaṃ gaccheti kopinā //
śapto'pyagaṇayan vākyaṃ yayau haihayapattanam /
tena baddho daśagrīvaḥ pulastyena vimocitaḥ //

There, the sacred bull called Nandi (which is the mount of Shiva) angrily cursed the king of demons (Ravana) in indignation that he would die at the hands of a human and monkeys (56). But Ravana was so overcome with arrogance, haughtiness and over confidence of his invincibility (because of the boons which he had received by Brahma in verse no. 13 and his subsequent successes) that he paid no attention to that curse, and (instead of hesitating and trying to find a way out of this hang man's noose cast around his neck, he became more aggressive and bellicose) he moved to the capital of Haihairaj (i.e. Sahastrarjun) to subdue him. There Ravana was captured by the latter and kept in captivity. Sage Pulastya (grandfather of Ravana) came to his aid and got him released (57).

[Note to verse no.56 :—This was the second major setback for Ravana after his first defeat at the hands of Indra as in verse nos. 50-51. His reckless, aggressive, belligerent and shattering journey of unrelenting conquest now left the demon on his tenterhooks because of the Nandi's curse—he became wary of such fragile, humble and apparently inconsequential creatures as humans and monkeys who could prove to be his nemesis and the proverbial last straw on the camel's back to do him in. Perhaps he regretted now as to why he had haughtily and over-confidently overlooked them while he was asking for boons from Brahma in verse no. 13, Canto 2.]

ततोऽतिबलमासाद्य जिघांसुर्हरिपुङ्गवम्। धृतस्तेनैव कक्षेण वालिना दशकन्धरः॥ 58॥
भ्रामयित्वा तु चतुरः समुद्रान् रावणं हरिः। विसर्जयामास ततस्तेन सख्यं चकार सः॥59॥

tato'tibalamāsādya jighāṃsurharipuṅgavam /
dhṛtastenaiva kakṣeṇa vālinā daśakandharaḥ //
bhrāmayitvā tu caturaḥ samudrān rāvaṇaṃ hariḥ /
visarjayāmāsa tatastena sakhyaṃ cakāra saḥ //

Then he (Ravana) determined to kill the king of monkeys (Vaali) who was immensely strong and powerful, but the tables were turned on him, as it were, and he was captured and kept pressed/squeezed under the arm pit of Vaali (58). He (Vaali) took Ravana around the 4 great oceans and then released him. Then Ravana made friends with him (under a treaty of friendship) (59).

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[Note :—(i) With the king of monkeys as his friend and tied to a bond of friendship, the only fear lurked from the humans, and amongst the humans, the sages, hermits, seers, mystics, mendicants etc. were considered most potent and powerful because of the mystical powers they possessed by the virtue of their austerities and penances. Ravana had already trounced their pride and sense of superiority and invincibility by killing a lot of them at random as in verse no. 47. With sage Parashuram having already crushed all the warrior clans—the Kshatriyas, the field seemed all clear for Ravana. He couldn't have imagined that an ordinary prince of Ayodhya could become his beta noir. It is very clear why Sri Ram had to kill Vaali, the king of monkeys, before launching his assault over Lanka—it was a necessary military strategy and prudent policy decision to safeguard the rear before the final battle. If Vaali were alive, he was bound by the treaty of friendship with Ravana as is clear from this verse no. 59 to come to the latter's aid. See Kishkindha Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 51-58 where Vaali has strongly admonished Sri Ram for killing him for no good reason. Though Sri Ram did not disclose the actual reason in so many words, the facts are very obvious and glaring to be overlooked.

(ii) Verse nos. 1-62 tell us the brief story of Ravana's clan and their ascendance to power and fame.]

रावणः परमप्रीत एवं लोकान्महाबलः। चकार स्ववशे राम बुभुजे स्वयमेव तान्।। 60।।
एवम्प्रभावो राजेन्द्र दशग्रीवः सहेन्द्रजित्। त्वया विनिहतः सङ्ख्ये रावणो लोकरावणः।। 61।।
मेघनादश्च निहतो लक्ष्मणेन महात्मना। कुम्भकर्णश्च निहतस्त्वया पर्वतसन्निभः।। 62।।

rāvaṇaḥ paramaprīta evaṃ lokānmahābalaḥ /
cakāra svavaśe rāma bubhuje svayameva tān //
evamprabhāvo rājendra daśagrīvaḥ sahendrajit /
tvayā vinihitaṃ saṅkhye rāvaṇo lokarāvaṇaḥ //
meghanādaśca nihato lakṣmaṇena mahātmanā /
kumbhakarṇaśca nihatastvayā parvatasannibhaḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! In this manner, Ravana could subdue and ruthlessly conquer the whole world by the strength of his arms and began enjoying it himself most delightedly as if it were his unquestioned fiefdom (because he had no opposition of any kind left around from whom to fear) (60).

Oh King of kings (Sri Ram)! Such was the great and unchallenged fame, influence, majesty, fear and terror of both the 10-headed one (Ravana) as well as the conqueror of Indra (Indrajeet, i.e. Meghnad). You had killed Ravana who had made the world literally weep (61).

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Meghnad was slayed by the great and virtuous Laxman, while Kumbhakarn who was colossus as a mountain was also slayed by you (62).

भवान्नारायणः साक्षाज्जगतामादिकृद्विभुः। त्वत्स्वरूपमिदं सर्वं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्।। 63।।
त्वन्नाभिकमलोत्पन्नो ब्रह्मा लोकपितामहः। अग्निस्ते मुखतो जातो वाचा सह रघूत्तम।।64।।

bhavānnārāyaṇaḥ sākṣājjagatāmādikṛdvibhuḥ /
tvatsvarūpamidaṃ sarvaṃ jagatsthāvarajaṅgamam //
tvannābhikamalotpanno brahmā lokapitāmahaḥ /
agniste mukhato jāto vācā saha raghūttama //

[Now, sage Agastya sings the prayers and lauds the glories of Sri Ram in the following verses—] You are the Lord Narayan himself who has created this world. You are almighty, eternal, benevolent, omnipresent and all-pervading. This whole animate as well as inanimate world is but only your image or reflection (63).

The grandfather of all the worlds, Lord Brahma, has himself been born out of the divine lotus emerging from your navel. Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! The Fire God and Speech have taken birth from your mouth (64).

बाहुभ्यां लोकपालौघाश्चक्षुर्भ्यां चन्द्रभास्करौ। दिशश्च विदिशश्चैव कर्णाभ्यां ते समुत्थिताः।। 65।।
घ्राणात्प्राणः समुत्पन्नश्चाश्विनौ देवसत्तमौ। जङ्घाजानूरुजघनाद्भुवर्लोकादयोऽभवन्।। 66।।

bāhubhyāṃ lokapālaughāścakṣurbhyāṃ candrabhāskarau /
diśaśca vidiśaścaiva karṇābhyāṃ te samutthitāḥ //
ghrāṇātprāṇaḥ samutpannaścāśvinau devasattamau /
jaṅghājānūrujaghanādbhuvarlokādayo'bhavan //

The various Lokpals (custodians of the world) have been born from your arms, the Sun and the Moon from your two eyes, and the various/ different directions from your ears (65). Your nose has produced (created) Pran, or the vital life-force in the form of the life infusing wind called breath, as well as the Ashwini Kumars (the God's medicine men) who are the best and the most exalted among the Gods. The celestial and other worlds have been created out of your thighs, knees, waist and hips (66).

कुक्षिदेशात्समुत्पन्नाश्चत्वारः सागरा हरे। स्तनाभ्यामिन्द्रवरुणौ बालखिल्याश्च रेतसः।। 67।।
मेढ्राद्यमो गुदान्मृत्युर्मन्यो रुद्रस्त्रिलोचनः। अस्थिभ्यः पर्वता जाताः केशेभ्यो मेघसंहतिः।।68।।
ओषध्यस्तव रोमेभ्यो नखेभ्यश्च खरादयः। त्वं विश्वरूपः पुरुषो मायाशक्तिसमन्वितः।।69।।

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kukṣideśātsamutpannāścatvāraḥ sāgarā hare /
stanābhyāmindravaruṇau vālakhilyāśca retasaḥ //
meḍhrādyamo gudānmṛtyurmanyo rudrastrilocanaḥ /
asthibhyaḥ parvatā jātāḥ keśebhyo meghasaṃhatiḥ //
oṣadhyastava romebhyo nakhebhyaśca kharādayaḥ /
tvaṃ viśvarūpaḥ puruṣo māyāśaktisamanvitaḥ //

Oh Hari (another name of Lord Vishnu; here meaning Sri Ram)! The four oceans have been formed out of your abdomen, Indra (the Lord of rain) and Varuna (the Lord of water) have been born out of your chest, while Vaalkhil and other sages have been created out of your sperms (67). Your loins have produced Yam (the patron God of death; it also refers to self-restraint), the anus has produced death itself, your anger/wrath has produced the 3-eyed Lord Shiva (symbolising annihilation of the world), your bones have produced the various mountains, your hairs (of the head) have produced the dark clouds (68), your body-hairs have produced medicinal herbs, and the nails and toes have produced donkeys and mules (i.e. all the hoofed animals). Being infused, endowed, charged and empowered by your own Maya (divine cosmic energy as well as the delusion creating powers of the Lord), you are the one who is known as the Viraat Purush who represents the whole manifest as well as the un-manifest world (i.e. the Viraat Purush is the gross body or the male aspect of the supreme Brahm) (69).

नानारूप इवाभासि गुणव्यतिकरे सति। त्वामाश्रित्यैव विबुधाः पिबन्त्यमृतमध्वरे ।। 70 ।।
त्वया सृष्टमिदं सर्वं विश्वं स्थावरजङ्गमम्। त्वामाश्रित्यैव जीवन्ति सर्वे स्थावरजङ्गमाः ।।71 ।।

nānārūpa ivābhāsi guṇavyatikare sati /
tvāmāśrityaiva vibudhāḥ pibantyamṛtamadhvare //
tvayā sṛṣṭamidaṃ sarvaṃ viśvaṃ sthāvarajaṅgamam /
tvāmāśrityaiva jīvanti sarve sthāvarajaṅgamāḥ //

In association or conjoined with the different characteristic features of different aspects of Nature, you appear to be different in myriad of forms. The Gods imbibe Amrit (the elixir of life) out of the offerings made in various religious sacrifices relying on your strength (i.e. they have been empowered by you to partake ambrosia and other best of offerings made during the fire sacrifices) (70).

This entire animate as well as inanimate, mobile as well as

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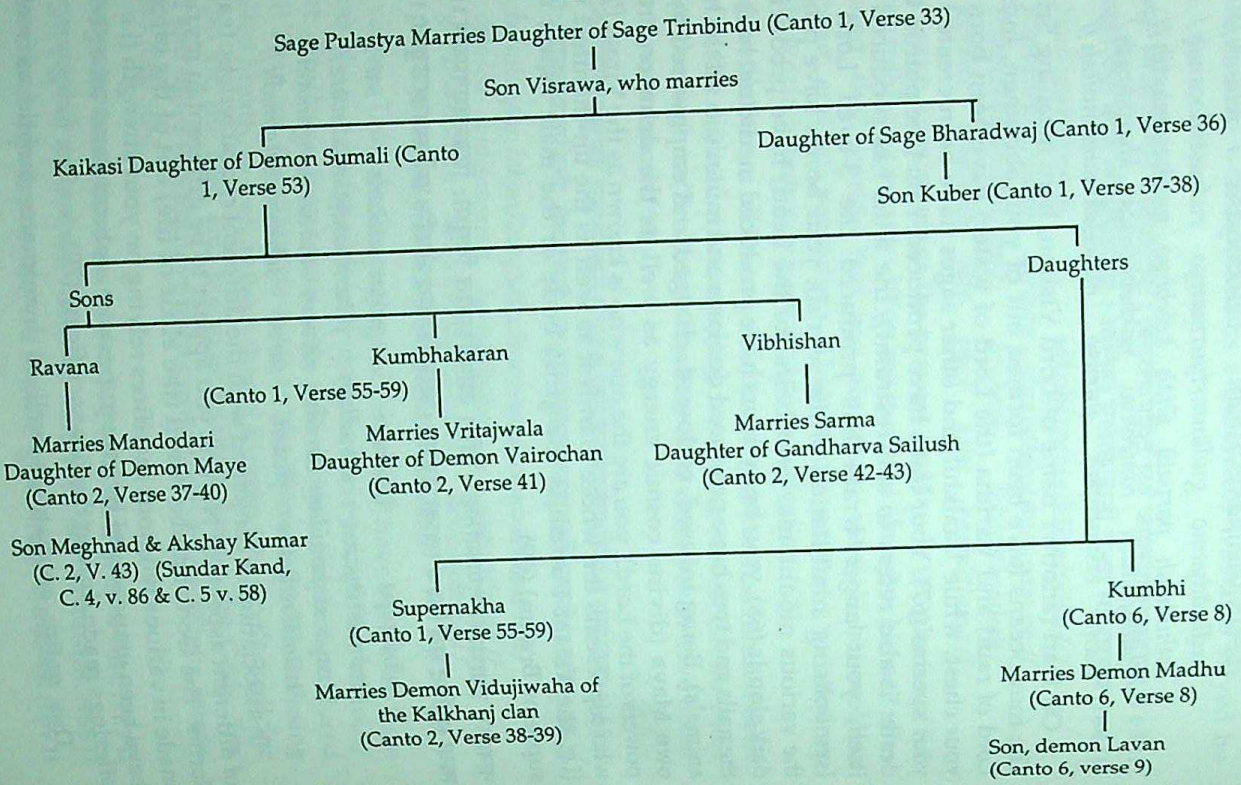
Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 42-43

The Family Tree of Ravana



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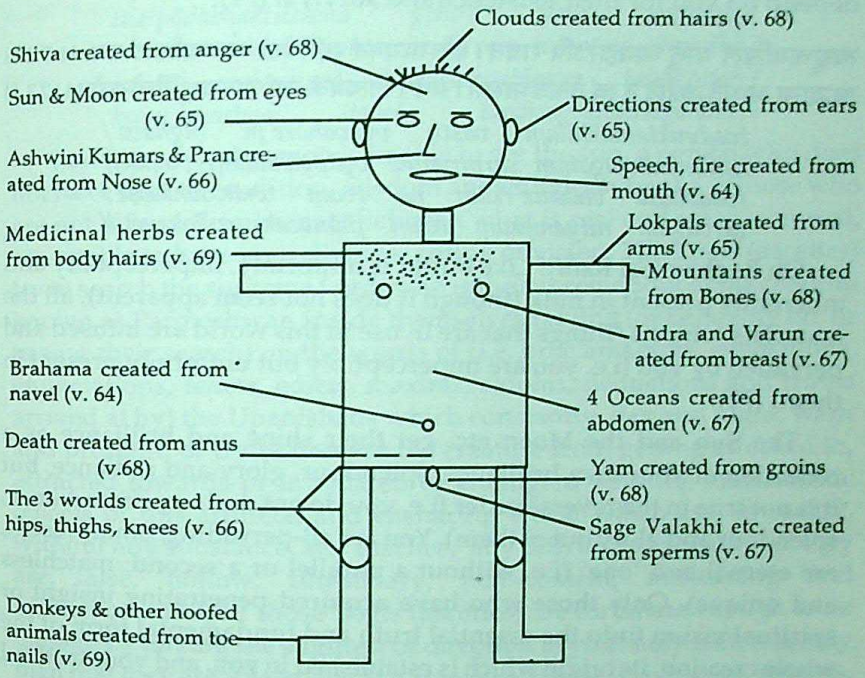
Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 63-69

Diagram of Creation of the World from Viraat Purush



[Note :- Another version of the 'Viraat' is detailed in Aranya Kand, canto 9, verse nos. 36-45 and a similar diagram appended to it.]

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immobile, visible as well as invisible world is your creation. All the living creatures in such a mundane, artificial and illusionary world survive by your mercy, grace, benevolence and munificence, and they depend on you for their existence and survival (71).

त्वद्युक्तमखिलं वस्तु व्यवहारेऽपि राघव। क्षीरमध्यगतं सर्पिर्यथा व्याप्याखिलं पयः।। 72।।
त्वद्भासा भासतेऽर्कादि न त्वं तेनावभाससे। सर्वगं नित्यमेकं त्वां ज्ञानचक्षुर्विलोकयेत्।।73।।

tvadyuktamakhilaṃ vastu vyavahāre'pi rāghava/
kṣīramadhyagataṃ sarpiryathā vyāpyākhilaṃ payaḥ//
tvadbhāsā bhāsate'rkādi na tvaṃ tenāvabhāsase/
sarvagaṃ nityamekaṃ tvāṃ jñānacakṣurvilokayet//

Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Like butter is uniformly, imperceptibly and inherently present in milk (though it does not seem apparent), all the materials/objects/things that are in use in this world are infused and pervaded by you (i.e. you are imperceptibly but uniformly present in them) (72).

The Sun and the Moon etc. get their shine and brilliance as a reflection of your own brilliance, splendour, glory and radiance, but it is not true in the reverse order (i.e. you do not derive your radiance, splendour and glory out of them). You are all-pervading, omnipresent, are eternal and 'one' (i.e. without a parallel or a second; matchless and unique). Only those who have acquired penetrating insight or spiritual vision (into the essential truth and fundamental form of the whole creation, its origin which is established in you, and your truthful form which is sublime, subtle, ethereal and macrocosmic—in other words, those who can penetrate through the labyrinth of philosophies and various schools of thoughts and are able to peer at the real and truthful form of the Lord and realise the essential truth behind the illusionary facade of the nature and the creation as it apparently looks on the surface of it) can have your divine sight, i.e. are able to 'see' you, understand you, realise you, perceive you in your mysterious essential and elementary form which is microcosmic as well as macrocosmic, all-pervading and omnipresent, formless as well as formed, without attributes as well as with attributes (73).

नाज्ञानचक्षुस्त्वां पश्येदन्धदृग् भास्करं यथा। योगिनस्त्वां विचिन्वन्ति स्वदेहे परमेश्वरम्।। 74।।
अतन्निरसनमुखैर्वेदशीर्षैरहर्निशम्। त्वत्पादभक्तिलेशेन गृहीता यदि योगिनः।।75।।
विचिन्वन्तो हि पश्यन्ति चिन्मात्रं त्वां न चान्यथा। मया प्रलपितं किञ्चित्सर्वज्ञस्य तवाग्रतः।
क्षन्तुमर्हसि देवेश तवानुग्रहभागहम्।।76।।

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nājñānacakṣustvāṃ paśyedandhadṛg bhāskaraṃ yathā /
yoginastvāṃ vicinvanti svadehe parameśvaram //
atannirasanamukhairvedaśīrṣairaharniśam /
tvatpādabhaktileśena gṛhītā yadi yoginaḥ //
vicinvanto hi paśyanti cinmātraṃ tvāṃ na cānyathā /
mayā pralapitaṃ kiñcitsarvajñasya tavāgrataḥ /
kṣantumarhasi deveśa tavānugrahabhāgaham //

Just like a blind person is unable to see the sun, a person who does not have eyes of erudition, wisdom and enlightenment, i.e. those who are not able to discriminate between what is real and what is unreal, are unable to have your divine sighting or vision. The Yogis (ascetics) try to search the supreme Lord, who is the supreme Soul of the creation known as Parmeshwar, inside themselves relying (or believing on, or basing their search) on the words of (i.e. proclamations, expositions, enunciations, tenets, edicts, maxims, axioms, deductions and truths arrived at by) the Upanishads which constantly, day and night, warn and prohibit, or try to prevent the creature from getting attached to, attracted towards or infatuated or entangled with the materialistic objects of this artificial and ensnaring world which are, in reality, without any substance, any essence, any pith and any truth (i.e. they are false, hollow, illusionary, non-existent, misleading and inconsequential). If those Yogis (ascetics) are fortunate enough to be blessed by having the slightest of devotion in your holy feet, it is only then that they are able to 'see' (i.e. perceive, realise, experience, witness, feel) your supreme, eternal, enlightened and pure conscious form after a long and arduous search. I have dared to speak boastfully in front of you who are all knowing and omniscient. So, please forgive me, oh Lord, for my audacity for I am worthy of having your mercy, grace, benevolence, munificence and benediction (74-76).

दिग्देशकालपरिहीनमनन्यमेकं चिन्मात्रमक्षरमजं चलनादिहीनम्।
सर्वज्ञमीश्वरमनन्तगुणं व्युदस्तमायं भजे रघुपतिं भजतामभिन्नम्।। 77।।

digdeśakālaparihīnamananyamekaṃ
cinmātramakṣaramajaṃ calanādihīnam /
sarvajñamīśvaramanantaguṇaṃ vyudasta-
māyaṃ bhaje raghupatiṃ bhajatāmabhinnam //

I worship, adore and have devotion for Raghupati who is without any fixed location (i.e. he is not limited to or bound by any specific

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place, direction, habitat, abode) and limitations of time and era, who is limitless and eternal, who is the only 'one' (unique, without a second, matchless, peerless, unparalleled), who is pure and enlightened consciousness, who is imperishable (i.e. eternally stable and unchanging, unwavering, un-diminishing and non-decaying), who is without a birth (i.e. without any beginning), who is free from the characteristic requirement of moving around to prove that he is alive, animate and living and not lifeless and inert, who is all knowing and omniscient, who is the supreme Lord of all, who possesses measureless virtues, values and characteristics, who is free from any deluding influence upon him, and who is always non-separable from his ardent devotees and followers' (77).

[Note :—Verse nos. 63-77 can be called the gospel of sage Agastya.]

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Uttar Kand — Canto 3

History of Vaali and Sugriv; Ravana's Conversation with Sanat Kumar

श्रीराम उवाच

वालिसुग्रीवयोर्जन्म श्रोतुमिच्छामि तत्त्वतः। रवीन्द्रौ वानराकारौ जज्ञात इति नः श्रुतम्॥1॥

śrīrāma uvāca

vālisugrīvayorjanma śrotumicchāmi tattvataḥ/
ravīndrau vānarākārau jajñāta iti naḥ śrutam//

Sri Ram asked, 'Oh sage (Agastya)! I wish to hear the story of the birth (and life) of Vaali and Sugriv. I have heard that Indra and Sun had manifested themselves in their form respectively' (1).

अगस्त्य उवाच

मेरोः स्वर्णमयस्यादेर्मध्यशृङ्गे मणिप्रभे। तस्मिन्सभास्ते विस्तीर्णा ब्रह्मणः शतयोजना॥2॥
तस्यां चतुर्मुखः साक्षात्कदाचिद्योगमास्थितः। नेत्राभ्यां पतितं दिव्यमानन्दसलिलं बहु॥3॥

agastya uvāca

meroḥ svarṇamayasyādrermadhyaśṛṅge maṇiprabhe/
tasminsabhāste vistīrṇā brahmaṇaḥ śatayojanā//

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tasyāṃ caturmukhaḥ sākṣātkadācidyogamāsthitaḥ /
netrābhyāṃ patitaṃ divyamānandasalilaṃ bahu //

Sage Agastya replied, 'Oh Sri Ram! The court of Lord Brahma, the creator, is situated on the central summit of Mt. Meru. This summit is as splendorous, luminous and radiant as glittering gems, is golden hued, and is spread over an area of one hundred Yojans, i.e. about 800 miles (2). During some ancient time, the 4-headed (Brahma) was sitting in a meditative posture there. At that time, numerous drops of blissful tears of extreme delight and contentedness fell from his eyes (3).

तद्गृहीत्वा करे ब्रह्मा ध्यात्वा किञ्चित्तदत्यजत्। भूमौ पतितमात्रेण तस्माज्जातो महाकपिः।।4।।
तमाह दुहिणो वत्स किञ्चित्कालं वसात्र मे। समीपे सर्वशोभाढ्ये ततः श्रेयो भविष्यति।।5।।

tadgṛhītvā kare brahmā dhyātvā kiñcittadatyajat /
bhūmau patitamātreṇa tasmājjāto mahākapiḥ //
tamāha druhiṇo vatsa kiñcitkālaṃ vasātra me /
samīpe sarvaśobhāḍhye tataḥ śreyo bhaviṣyati //

He held them in his hands (i.e. open palms) for some time, pondered over something, and then dropped them on the earth. As soon as they (tear drops) fell on the ground, a very large monkey emerged from them (4). Brahma said to him, 'Oh son! Stay for some time in my place which possesses all comforts and it is magnificent as well. It will benefit you and give you fame' (5).

इत्युक्तो न्यवसत्तत्र ब्रह्मणा वानरोत्तमः। एवं बहुतिथे काले गते ऋक्षाधिपः सुधीः।।6।।
कदाचित्पर्यटन्नद्रौ फलमूलार्थमुद्यतः। अपश्यद्दिव्यसलिलां वापीं मणिशिलान्विताम्।।7।।

ityukto nyavasattatra brahmaṇā vānarottamaḥ /
evaṃ bahutithe kāle gate ṛkṣādhipaḥ sudhīḥ //
kadācitparyaṭannadrau phalamūlārthamudyataḥ /
apaśyaddivyasalilāṃ vāpīṃ maṇiśilānvitām //

When he had said so, that superior monkey took up his residence there. After a long period of time, one day that most wise monkey called Rikshadhipati (6), while wandering around in search of fruits and other eatables, came across a magnificent water body (e.g. a pond) which was full of clean water and was adorned by rocks studded with gems and jewels (7).

पानीयं पातुमागच्छत्तत्रच्छायामयं कपिम्। दृष्ट्वा प्रतिकपिं मत्वा निपपात जलान्तरे।।8।।
तत्रादृष्ट्वा हरिं शीघ्रं पुनरुत्प्लुत्य वानरः। अपश्यत्सुन्दरीं रामामात्मानं विस्मयं गतः।।9।।

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pānīyaṃ pātumāgacchattatracchāyāmayaṃ kapim /
dṛṣṭvā pratikapiṃ matvā nipapāta jalāntare //
tatrādṛṣṭvā hariṃ śīghraṃ punarutplutya vānaraḥ /
apaśyatsundarīṃ rāmāmātmānaṃ vismayaṃ gataḥ //

When he went there to drink water, he saw an image (reflection) of a monkey in the water. Thinking that the reflection in the water was his opponent or a challenger, he jumped inside the water of the pond (8). Finding that there was no monkey inside the water, he immediately jumped out of it, but to his astonishment, he found himself transformed into a beautiful maiden (9).

ततः सुरेशो देवेशं पूजयित्वा चतुर्मुखम्। गच्छन्मध्याह्नसमये दृष्ट्वा नारीं मनोरमाम्।। 10।।
कन्दर्पशरविद्धाङ्गस्त्यक्तवान्वीर्यमुत्तमम्। तामप्राप्यैव तद्बीजं वालदेशेऽपतद्भुवि।।11।।
वाली समभवत्तत्र शक्रतुल्यपराक्रमः। तस्य दत्त्वा सुरेशानः स्वर्णमालां दिवं गतः।।12।।

tataḥ sureśo deveśaṃ pūjayitvā caturmukham /
gacchanmadhyāhnasamaye dṛṣṭvā nārīṃ manoramām //
kandarpaśaraviddhāṅgastyaktavānvīryamuttamam /
tāmaprāpyaiva tadbījaṃ vāladeśe'patadbhuvi //
vālī samabhavattatra śakratulyaparākramaḥ /
tasya dattvā sureśānaḥ svarṇamālāṃ divaṃ gataḥ //

At that time, the king of Gods (Indra) was returning after having offered his worship and adoration to the 4-headed Brahma at about noon time. When he saw that most beautiful lady (10), he was overcome with passion and desire (to have a conjugal relationship with her) and he ejaculated his powerful and immaculate semen. That semen could not be received by that woman, but instead it touched her hairs and fell to the ground (11). With that, Vaali was born, who was as majestic, valorous, valiant, powerful and invincible as Indra. The king of Gods (Indra) presented him with a golden garland and went his way to the heaven (12).

[Note :—Verse nos. 2-12 narrate the birth of Vaali, the elder brother of Sugriv. He was the son of Indra.]

भानुरप्यागतस्तत्र तदानीमेव भामिनीम्। दृष्ट्वा कामवशो भूत्वा ग्रीवादेशेऽसृजन्महत्।। 13।।
बीजं तस्यास्ततः सद्यो महाकायोऽभवद्धरिः। तस्य दत्त्वा हनूमन्तं सहायार्थं गतो रविः।।14।।

bhānurapyāgatastatra tadānīmeva bhāminīm /
dṛṣṭvā kāmavaśo bhūtvā grīvādeśe'srjanmahat //
bījaṃ tasyāstataḥ sadyo mahākāyo'bhavaddhariḥ /
tasya dattvā hanūmantaṃ sahāyārthaṃ gato raviḥ //

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(After the departure of Indra—) The Sun God also came there. He too was attracted towards that beauty and was overcome with passion. He ejaculated, and his powerful and potent semen landed on her neck (or nape) (13). Instantly, a colossus monkey was produced by it. The Sun God entrusted him to Hanuman for care and help, and then went his way (14).

[Note :—Hanuman was the Sun God's chosen disciple and he had acquired his education with the latter as his teacher. Hanuman was a favoured student of the Sun God. So by entrusting him with the care and welfare of the newly born monkey-son, the Sun God felt relieved about the well-being of the infant monkey. This verse also shows that Hanuman was much older in age than both Vaali and Sugriv as well as it highlights the fact as to why Hanuman sided with Sugriv at the time of his exile from Kishkindha and always thought about Sugriv's welfare. It was this moment—when his moral preceptor, the Sun God, had put the newly born Sugriv in his custody and guardianship—that morally bound Hanuman to Sugriv.

These verses also show how Vaali became the elder brother of Sugriv.]

पुत्रद्वयं समादाय गत्वा सा निद्रिता क्वचित्। प्रभातेऽपश्यदात्मानं पूर्ववद्वानराकृतिम्।। 15।।
फलमूलादिभिः सार्धं पुत्राभ्यां सहितः कपिः। नत्वा चतुर्मुखस्याग्रे ऋक्षराजः स्थितः सुधीः।। 16।।

putradvayaṃ samādāya gatvā sā nidritā kvacit /
prabhāte'paśyadātmānaṃ pūrvavadvānarakṛtim //
phalamūlādibhiḥ sārdhaṃ putrābhyāṃ sahitaḥ kapiḥ /
natvā caturmukhasyāgre ṛkṣarājaḥ sthitaḥ sudhīḥ //

That lady took those two sons somewhere and fell asleep. The next morning, when she woke up, she found herself once again reverted to her original form of a monkey (15). Then that wise Riksharaj collected fruits and edible roots etc. and accompanied by his two sons came to the court of Brahma, the 4-headed Lord, bowed and stood before him (16).

ततोऽब्रवीत्समाश्वास्य बहुशः कपिकुञ्जरम्। तत्रैकं देवतादूतमाहूयामरसन्निभम्।। 17।।
गच्छ दूत मयादिष्टो गृहीत्वा वानरोत्तमम्। किष्किन्धां दिव्यनगरीं निर्मितां विश्वकर्मणा।। 18।।

tato'bravītsamāśvāsya bahuśaḥ kapikuñjaram /
tatraikaṃ devatādūtamāhūyāmarasannibham //
gaccha dūta mayādiṣṭo gṛhītvā vānarottamam /
kiṣkindhāṃ divyanagarīṃ nirmitāṃ viśvakarmaṇā //

Then he (Brahma) explained the things and rationalised with that

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best of monkeys in various ways. Thereafter, he summoned one of the celestial messengers and said (17), 'Oh messenger! On my instructions, take this excellent monkey, who is the best amongst his kind, to the magnificent city of Kishkindha, developed and constructed by Vishwakarma (18).

सर्वसौभाग्यवलितां देवैरपि दुरासदाम्। तस्यां सिंहासने वीरं राजानमभिषेचय।। 19।।
सप्तद्वीपगता ये ये वानराः सन्ति दुर्जयाः। सर्वे ते ऋक्षराजस्य भविष्यन्ति वशेऽनुगाः।। 20।।

sarvasaubhāgyavalitāṃ devairapi durāsadam/
tasyāṃ siṃhāsane vīraṃ rājānamabhiṣecaya//
saptadvīpagatā ye ye vānarāḥ santi durjayāḥ/
sarve te ṛkṣarājasya bhaviṣyanti vaśe'nugāḥ//

It is provided with all possible comforts, grandeur, fortunes, prosperity, fame and excellence, and is unconquerable even by the Gods. Anoint this brave fellow on the throne of that place (19). All the valiant and formidable monkey warriors living in all the seven continents shall be subordinate to this monkey called Riksharaj (i.e. all the monkey chieftains representing various clans shall be under the tutelage of this king who will be the emperor of the monkey race, and I hereby declare him to be so) (20).

[Note :—The monkey called Riksharaj is a different person than the bear king Jamvant who has also been referred to by the same word Riksharaj because of the fact that the bears are called Riksha in Sanskrit and Jamwant was their king. But the two should not be confused with each other. The probable reason for that monkey being called Riksha meaning a bear is that he resembled a bear in his physical appearances.]

यदा नारायणः साक्षाद्रामो भूत्वा सनातनः। भूभारासुरनाशाय सम्भविष्यति भूतले।। 21।।
तदा सर्वे सहायार्थे तस्य गच्छन्तु वानराः। इत्युक्तो ब्रह्मणा दूतो देवानां स महामतिः।। 22।।
यथाज्ञप्तस्तथा चक्रे ब्रह्मणा तं हरीश्वरम्। देवदूतस्ततो गत्वा ब्रह्मणे तन्न्यवेदयत्।। 23।।
तदादि वानराणां सा किष्किन्धाभून्नृपाश्रयः।। 24।।

yadā nārāyaṇaḥ sākṣādrāmo bhūtvā sanātanaḥ/
bhūbhārāsuranāśāya sambhaviṣyati bhūtale//
tadā sarve sahāyārthe tasya gacchantu vānarāḥ/
ityukto brahmaṇā dūto devānāṃ sa mahāmatiḥ//
yathājñaptastathā cakre brahmaṇā taṃ harīśvaram/
devadūtastato gatvā brahmaṇe tannyavedayat//
tadādi vānarāṇāṃ sā kiṣkindhābhūnnṛpāśrayaḥ//

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At the time when the eternal, supreme Lord Narayan himself shall manifest on the earth (in the form of Sri Ram) to remove its burden caused by the demon by eliminating them (21), let all the monkeys go and help him at that time'. When Brahma had instructed so, the wise messenger of the Gods (22) arranged everything for that king of monkeys as instructed by Brahma. Having done so, he went back to him and informed him about everything (23).

Since that time, Kishkindha became the capital city of monkeys (24).

सर्वेश्वरस्त्वमेवासीरिदानीं ब्रह्मणार्थितः। भूमेर्भारो हृतः कृत्स्नस्त्वया लीलानृदेहिना।
सर्वभूतान्तरस्थस्य नित्यमुक्तचिदात्मनः॥25॥
अखण्डानन्तरूपस्य कियानेष पराक्रमः। तथापि वर्ण्यते सद्भिर्लीलामानुषरूपिणः॥26॥
यशस्ते सर्वलोकानां पापहत्यै सुखाय च। य इदं कीर्तयेन्मर्त्यो वालिसुग्रीवयोर्महत्॥27॥
जन्म त्वदाश्रयत्वात्स मुच्यते सर्वपातकैः॥28॥

sarveśvarastvamevāsīridānīṃ brahmaṇārthitaḥ/
bhūmerbhāro hṛtaḥ kṛtsnastvayā līlānṛdehinā/
sarvabhūtāntarasthasya nityamuktacidātmanaḥ//
akhaṇḍānantarūpasya kiyāneṣa parākramaḥ/
tathāpi varṇyate sadbhirlīlāmānuṣarūpiṇaḥ//
yaśaste sarvalokānāṃ pāpahatyai sukhāya ca/
ya idaṃ kīrtayenmartyo vālisugrīvayormahat//
janma tvadāśrayatvātsa mucyate sarvapātakaiḥ//

'Oh Sri Ram! You are the Lord of all beings. On the prayers of Brahma, you have assumed an illusionary form (or an image) of a human being and have removed all the burden of the earth. You are present inherently (intrinsically, as the essential ingredient and active factor) in all the 5 elements[1], are eternally free or without any shackles or limitations, are pure, eternal, truthful, supreme conscious Atma or soul (25), are without any parts or fractions, are imperishable, uniform, immutable and indivisible, and are without a beginning and/or an end.

Say, for you who are so great, doing this (i.e. liberation of the earth from the tyranny of pervert, sinful, tormenting and terrorising demons) is nothing of much consequence or an event requiring any great effort on your part[2]. Inspite of that, your playful, sporting activities as a human being are narrated by sages, seers and saints (26) with the

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intention of destroying the various sins and their effects on this world as well as to provide mental and spiritual solace and succour to it (i.e. the creatures of the world) through the medium of singing your divine fame and glories. Those people who would narrate, sing and listen to (literally, chant in unison in a group; do 'Kirtan') this story relating to Vaali and Sugriv shall be protected by you, and they shall be freed/ liberated from all their sins, evils, misdeeds and misdemeanors (and their horrifying effects)[3] (27-28).

[Note—[1]The five fundamental elements of creation are earth, water, fire, air and sky in rising order of subtlety.

[2]For you it was an easy task requiring the least of all efforts for you can do much more formidable and stupendous tasks just by mere wishing or blinking an eyelid, as it were. This job of eliminating the savage demons was literally a child's play or a cake walk for you for you are capable of doing immensely more greater things. You are the supreme transcendental cosmic Lord of creation whose mere wink can either create or conclude the entire creation in a fraction of a second, so you could have killed these demons by simply wishing to do so. But you had other considerations when you decided to reveal yourself as an incarnation of Ram, and one of them was to fulfill the wishes of your devotees who wished to have you amongst them. So, to praise you for such an inconsequential thing as slaying of demons is like showing a lamp to the Sun, as it were.

[3]Hearing of the story pertaining to Vaali and Sugriv would necessarily involve, as its integral part, your divine deeds and your own glorious story as a human incarnation. Further, when one reads this story, one would naturally come across numerous gospels which are incorporated as an integral and inextricable part of the story, and when one would understand their import one is bound to be wisened to the magnificent spiritual philosophy that would become a boat that would ultimately lead to one's liberation and deliverance from the fetters of ignorance and delusions, which would finally pave the path for ultimate emancipation and salvation of the creature. The story serves two purposes at the same time—one is to keep one engaged by an interesting narration of a fascinating story, and the other is to inculcate wisdom and enlightenment through the various gospels contained therein. These profound spiritual philosophies are rendered palatable and interesting when they are mixed with a liberal dose of an interesting story.]

अथान्यां सम्प्रवक्ष्यामि कथां राम त्वदाश्रयाम्। सीता हृता यदर्थं सा रावणेन दुरात्मना।। 29।।
पुरा कृतयुगे राम प्रजापतिसुतं विभुम्। सनत्कुमारमेकान्ते समासीनं दशाननः।
विनयावनतो भूत्वा ह्यभिवाद्येदमब्रवीत्।। 30।।

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athānyāṃ sampravakṣyāmi kathāṃ rāma tvadāśrayām /
sītā hṛtā yadarthaṃ sā rāvaṇena durātmanā //
purā kṛtayuge rāma prajāpatisutaṃ vibhum /
sanatkumāramekānte samāsīnaṃ daśānanaḥ /
vinayāvanato bhūtvā hyabhivādyedamabravīt //

Oh Sri Ram! Now I shall narrate to you one more story concerning you which shall tell you why the wicked Ravana had abducted Sita (29).

Once upon a time, during the Satyug (the first of the 4-Yug celestial cycle), Ravana, the 10-headed one, approached Brahm's son Sanatkumar, who was sitting alone, and said to him most politely (30)—

को न्वस्मिन्प्रवरो लोके देवानां बलवत्तरः। देवाश्च यं समाश्रित्य युद्धे शत्रुं जयन्ति हि।।31।।
कं यजन्ति द्विजा नित्यं कं ध्यायन्ति च योगिनः। एतन्मे शंस भगवन् प्रश्नं प्रश्नविदांवर।।32।।

ko nvasminpravaro loke devānāṃ balavattaraḥ /
devāśca yaṃ samāśritya yuddhe śatruṃ jayanti hi //
kaṃ yajanti dvijā nityaṃ kaṃ dhyāyanti ca yoginaḥ /
etanme śaṃsa bhagavan praśnaṃ praśnavidāṃvara //

'Who is that God who is the best among all the Gods, and is most brave, strong and valiant amongst them, and by seeking whose protection (or shelter) the Gods are able to vanquish all their enemies and opponents in the battle (31). Who do the Brahmins worship and adore, and who is the subject of meditation done by the Yogis (ascetics)? Oh Lord! You are the best amongst those who know the answers to all possible questions (i.e. you are expert in general knowledge, wisdom and are the best person who can answer my question). Hence, please answer my query (or remove my doubts)' (32).

ज्ञात्वा तस्य हृदिस्थं यत्तदशेषेण योगदृक्। दशाननमुवाचेदं शृणु वक्ष्यामि पुत्रक।। 33।।
भर्ता यो जगतां नित्यं यस्य जन्मादिकं न हि। सुरासुरैर्नुतो नित्यं हरिर्नारायणोऽव्ययः।।34।।

jñātvā tasya hṛdisthaṃ yattadaśeṣeṇa yogadṛk /
daśānanamuvācedaṃ śṛṇu vakṣyāmi putraka //
bhartā yo jagatāṃ nityaṃ yasya janmādikaṃ na hi /
surāsurairnuto nityaṃ harirnārāyaṇo'vyayaḥ //

Sanatkumar came to realise the real intention of Ravana in asking

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these questions through his divine, penetrating vision of insight acquired by the force (powers) of Yoga (meditation). He said to Ravana, 'Oh son! Listen, I am answering your question (33). He, who always sustains and nourishes the whole creation, who neither takes birth nor dies, who is eternally adored, worshipped and honoured by the Gods as well as the demons alike, who is imperishable and stable, whose name is Sri Narayan Hari (i.e. Vishnu) (34)—

यन्नाभिपङ्कजाज्जातो ब्रह्मा विश्वसृजां पतिः। सृष्टं येनैव सकलं जगत्स्थावरजङ्गमम्।।35।।
तं समाश्रित्य विबुधा जयन्ति समरे रिपून्। योगिनो ध्यानयोगेन तमेवानुजपन्ति हि।।36।।

yannābhipaṅkajājjāto brahmā viśvasṛjāṃ patiḥ/
sṛṣṭaṃ yenaiva sakalaṃ jagatsthāvarajaṅgamam//
taṃ samāśritya vibudhā jayanti samare ripūn/
yogino dhyānayogena tamevānujapanti hi//

—Even Brahma, the creator of this whole creation, had been born out of the divine lotus that had emerged out of his navel, and he who has even created this animate as well as inanimate (i.e. movable as well as immovable) mundane, delusory and illusive world (35)—it is 'his' strength relying upon which the Gods conquer all their enemies in any battle, while the Yogis (ascetics) also repeat his holy name, worship and glorify him through meditation and other Yogic practices' (36).

महर्षेर्वचनं श्रुत्वा प्रत्युवाच दशाननः। दैत्यदानवरक्षांसि विष्णुना निहतानि च।। 37।।
कां वा गतिं प्रपद्यन्ते प्रेत्य ते मुनिपुङ्गव। तमुवाच मुनिश्रेष्ठो रावणं राक्षसाधिपम्।।38।।

maharṣervacanaṃ śrutvā pratyuvāca daśānanaḥ/
daityadānavarakṣāṃsi viṣṇunā nihatāni ca//
kāṃ vā gatiṃ prapadyante pretya te munipuṅgava/
tamuvāca muniśreṣṭho rāvaṇaṃ rākṣasādhipam//

Hearing these words of the great sage Sanatkumar, the 10-headed Ravana asked once again, 'Oh the exalted sage! What is the fate of those demons, evil ones, devils, Satans and ogres who are killed by Vishnu?' Then the best amongst the sages (Sanatkumar) replied to Ravana, the king of demons (37-38)—

दैवतैर्निहता नित्यं गत्वा स्वर्गमनुत्तमम्। भोगक्षये पुनस्तस्माद्भ्रष्टा भूमौ भवन्ति ते।।39।।
पूर्वार्जितैः पुण्यपापैर्म्रियन्ते चोद्भवन्ति च। विष्णुना ये हतास्ते तु प्राप्नुवन्ति हरेर्गतिम्।।40।।

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daivatairnihatā nityaṃ gatvā svargamanuttamam /
bhogakṣaye punastasmādbhraṣṭā bhūmau bhavanti te //
pūrvārjitaiḥ puṇyapāpairmriyante codbhavanti ca /
viṣṇunā ye hatāste tu prāpnuvanti harergatim //

'When they (the demons etc.) are killed by other Gods, they go to heaven which is the best amongst all the places to go after death. There, they live for as long as their destiny determines (or till the time the good effects of the exalted death of the demons at the hands of a God wears off), and then they revert back (or fall back) to the terrestrial world (earth) (39). As a result, they fall back in the cycle of birth and death once again depending upon their evil or good deeds and demeanors.

On the contrary, those who die at the hands of Vishnu do not enter this cycle, and instead they attain liberation from this vicious cycle and get emancipation and salvation in the form of his supreme abode (or become one with the Lord)' (40).

श्रुत्वा मुनिमुखात्सर्वं रावणो हृष्टमानसः। योत्स्येऽहं हरिणा सार्धमिति चिन्तापरोऽभवत्॥41॥
मनःस्थितं परिज्ञाय रावणस्य महामुनिः। उवाच वत्स तेऽभीष्टं भविष्यति न संशयः॥42॥

śrutvā munimukhātsarvaṃ rāvaṇo hṛṣṭamānasaḥ /
yotsye'haṃ hariṇā sārdhamiti cintāparo'bhavat //
manaḥsthitaṃ parijñāya rāvaṇasya mahāmuniḥ /
uvāca vatsa te'bhīṣṭaṃ bhaviṣyati na saṃśayaḥ //

Hearing these words from the mouth of the sage, Ravana was internally very glad and pleased, and after contemplating for some time, he decided that he will certainly fight with Sri Hari (or shall create ill-will, hatred and enmity with Sri Vishnu leading to confrontation and death at his hands) (41).

The great sage had an insight into the thought processes of Ravana, and so he said, 'Oh son! There is no doubt that your wishes shall be fulfilled (42).

कञ्चित्कालं प्रतीक्षस्व सुखी भव दशानन। एवमुक्त्वा महाबाहो मुनिः पुनरुवाच तम्॥43॥
तस्य स्वरूपं वक्ष्यामि ह्यरूपस्यापि मायिनः। स्थावरेषु च सर्वेषु नदेषु च नदीषु च॥44॥

kañcitkālaṃ pratīkṣasva sukhī bhava daśānana /
evamuktvā mahābāho muniḥ punaruvāca tam //
tasya svarūpaṃ vakṣyāmi hyarūpasyāpi māyinaḥ /
sthāvareṣu ca sarveṣu nadeṣu ca nadīṣu ca //

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Oh the 10-headed one (Ravana)! Take it easy and wait for some more time'.

Oh the valiant and valorous one (literally, the one with strong and robust arms) i.e. Sri Ram! The sage (Sanatkumar) once again said to Ravana (43), 'He (Vishnu) is formless and invisible, but still I shall tell you the various forms which that maverick Lord assumes. He pervades in both the large and small rivers as well as all other non-living entities represented by the inanimate form of the world (44).

ओङ्कारश्चैव सत्यं च सावित्री पृथिवी च सः। समस्तजगदाधारः शेषरूपधरो हि सः।। 45।।
सर्वे देवाः समुद्राश्च कालः सूर्यश्च चन्द्रमाः। सूर्योदयो दिवारात्री यमश्चैव तथानिलः।।46।।
अग्निरिन्द्रस्तथा मृत्युः पर्जन्यो वसवस्तथा। ब्रह्मा रुद्रादयश्चैव ये चान्ये देवदानवाः।।47।।

oṅkāraścaiva satyaṃ ca sāvitrī pṛthivī ca saḥ/
samastajagadādhāraḥ śeṣarūpadharo hi saḥ//
sarve devāḥ samudrāśca kālaḥ sūryaśca candramāḥ/
sūryodayo divārātrī yamaścaiva tathānilaḥ//
agnirindrastathā mṛtyuḥ parjanyo vasavastathā/
brahmā rudrādayaścaiva ye cānye devadānavāḥ//

He is 'Onkar' (i.e. the primieval cosmic sound from which the whole creation is said to have originated; the ethereal divine word OM); he is 'Satya' (i.e. that which is immutably, irrefutably and unequivocally the supreme and eternal Truth and absolute Reality); he is 'Savitri' (i.e. the mother of Vedas, embodiment of pristine knowledge, Saraswati; in the masculine form the word सावित्र 'Savitra' he represents the Sun, the illuminator of the world, splendorous, radiant, brilliant and dazzling; the sun is symbolic of wisdom, knowledge and enlightenment); he is 'Prithivi' (the earth; here symbolic of the bowl which sustains life); and 'Sheshnath' (who is the support or bearer of the whole world) (45).

All the Gods, the oceans, the Kaal (symbolizing time, eras, circumstances and various periods in the life of creation), the Sun and the Moon, the Dawn (this reference to the rising sun symbolises the elimination of darkness of ignorance and the advent of wisdom and enlightenment), the Days and the Nights (again, it means both enlightenment and wisdom represented by the day as well as ignorance and sins and vices by the nights; in metaphoric terms, it means the full cycle of existence consisting of the day representing advent of

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life, and the night representing its end or death), the Yam (the patron God of death and hell; the word also stands for self restraint and control over passions), the Wind (here the wind symbolises the life giving force called Pran; in physical terms, the wind is very essential for existence because it is used synonymously with air that we breathe) (46), the Fire (representing energy and vitality of creation; also meaning the sacrificial fire), Indra (the king of Gods; also symbolizing that patron God who controls all the sense organs of the body called 'Indris'), the Death, the Clouds (here symbolising the life sustaining rain and water), the different Vasus (they are eight prominent semigods; the word also means jewels, wealth, fire, rays, radiance, water, gold, Kuber, Shiva, the Sun, saintly people, water bodies such as pond, lake etc.), Lord Brahma (the creator), Shiva (the annihilator) and all other Gods and Demons that exist—all of these jointly and separately are nothing else but his many, varied and myriad forms (47).

विद्योतते ज्वलत्येष पाति चात्तीति विश्वकृत्। क्रीडां करोत्यव्ययात्मा सोऽयं विष्णुः सनातनः ।। 48 ।।
तेन सर्वमिदं व्याप्तं त्रैलोक्यं सचराचरम्। नीलोत्पलदलश्यामो विद्युद्वर्णाम्बरावृतः ।। 49 ।।

vidyotate jvalatyeṣa pāti cāttīti viśvakṛt /
krīḍāṃ karotyavyayātmā so'yaṃ viṣṇuḥ sanātanaḥ //
tena sarvamidaṃ vyāptaṃ trailokyaṃ sacarācaram /
nīlotpaladalaśyāmo vidyudvarṇāmbarāvṛtaḥ //

Lord Vishnu, who is the creator of this whole universe, is eternal, truthful, changeless, uniform, ancient and primeval, but inspite of that he does various deeds and performs numerous sporting activities through the medium of his delusory powers called Maya.

He shines, glows, dazzles and illuminates in his form as Electric (i.e. is the power which illuminates the world, or is a power which is as potent and formidable as the power of electricity); he ignites and burns in the form of Fire; he protects everyone in the form of the eternal Vishnu, and he annihilates (i.e. eats up, devours, ends and concludes) all in the shape of Shiva (48).

This whole animate as well as inanimate world called Triloki—the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds—is uniformly pervaded by him. His complexion is dark like the petals of a blue lotus, and he wears a Pitambar which has the dazzle and radiance of electric (49).

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शुद्धजाम्बूनदप्रख्यां श्रियं वामाङ्कसंस्थिताम्। सदानपायिनीं देवीं पश्यन्नालिङ्ग्य तिष्ठति।।50।।
द्रष्टुं न शक्यते कैश्चिद्देवदानवपन्नगैः। यस्य प्रसादं कुरुते स चैनं द्रष्टुमर्हति।।51।।

śuddhajāmbūnadaprakhyāṃ śriyaṃ vāmāṅkasaṃsthitām /
sadānapāyinīṃ devīṃ paśyannāliṅgya tiṣṭhati //
draṣṭuṃ na śakyate kaiścid devadānavapannagaiḥ /
yasya prasādaṃ kurute sa cainaṃ draṣṭumarhati //

On his left is seated goddess Laxmi who has a radiant glow similar to that of pure gold, who is indestructible and non-perishable, and who is being affectionately looked upon and held closely by him (Sri Ram) (50).

He is invisible to all the Gods, demons or legendary serpents (i.e. they are unable to visualise him and his true form), but only those towards whom he is munificent, pleased and favourably inclined can ever hope to have his divine and sublime august vision (called Darshan) (51).

न च यज्ञतपोभिर्वा न दानाध्ययनादिभिः। शक्यते भगवान्द्रष्टुमुपायैरितरैरपि।।52।।
तद्भक्तैस्तद्गतप्राणैस्तच्चित्तैर्धूतकल्मषैः। शक्यते भगवान्विष्णुर्वेदान्तामलदृष्टिभिः।।53।।

na ca yajñatapobhirvā na dānādhyayanādibhiḥ /
śakyate bhagavāndraṣṭumupāyairitarairapi //
tadbhaktaistadgataprāṇaistaccittairdhūtakalmaṣaiḥ /
śakyate bhagavānviṣṇurvedāntāmaladṛṣṭibhiḥ //

The Lord God cannot be seen or observed by doing Yagya (various religious sacrifices, especially fire sacrifices), Tapa (severe penances, austerities and undertaking hardships), Daan (doing charities, giving alms and making donations), Adhyan (studying of the scriptures) or any other means (52).

On the contrary, Lord Vishnu's divine, ethereal and sublime vision is possible only to his ardent devotees whose entire being, whose Pran and Mana (i.e. their emotions and thoughts, their heart and mind-intellect apparatus, and all of their existential activities and deeds), are always directed at and hitched to the Lord and his various revelations (i.e. they are always, constantly and persistently thinking of the Lord God, reflecting upon him, remembering him and his holy name even while doing their assigned worldly activities and going about their duties). The Lord's divine vision is also available to such people whose mental sight and vision (i.e. the spiritual insight) have

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become purified by contemplating upon and deeply concentrating on the spiritual philosophy of Vedant (Upanishads)[1]. [Note—[1]Those people who study the Upanishads acquire the power of deep penetrating insight that helps them to delve deep into their tenets and spiritual doctrines, deriving profound knowledge from them and inculcating wisdom and enlightenment as a consequence, are bound to have clear vision and perception of the reality and truth behind the smoke screen of deception and illusion that this world of artificiality presents to them. It is like separating the grain from the chaff. They can distinguish between what is truly real, the truthful reality, and what appears to be true, the apparent truth, but is actually false. It is like the veil of cataract being removed from the eyes of a person when he begins to see things very clearly.] (53).

[Note—[1]Those people who study the Upanishads acquire the power of deep penetrating insight that helps them to delve deep into their tenets and spiritual doctrines, deriving profound knowledge from them and inculcating wisdom and enlightenment as a consequence, are bound to have clear vision and perception of the reality and truth behind the smoke screen of deception and illusion that this world of artificiality presents to them. It is like separating the grain from the chaff. They can distinguish between what is truly real, the truthful reality, and what appears to be true, the apparent truth, but is actually false. It is like the veil of cataract being removed from the eyes of a person when he begins to see things very clearly.

Wise, enlightened and realised people are those who have delved deep into and realised the truth behind this so-called real world, the essence of existence, the Atma or soul, the fact that it (the soul) is but a microcosmic miniscule part of the all-pervading macrocosmic supreme Soul, and that this soul is different from even this body of the creature and its surrounding artificial world of the sense objects and materialistic comforts—and as a consequence they have realised the futility of pursuing this delusory and inconsequential mundane world.

This realisation, whenever it dawns upon the Lord's devotee, helps him to turn inwards in search of the Supreme Truth about the Lord God and also about his own self which is the pure conscious Atma or soul, and the seeker comes to the conclusion that the Lord God is present inside himself as his own Atma, and not anywhere outside. That dazzling, bright halo of light which the seeker experiences inside him in a flash of realisation is the light seen through divine eyes. Or in other words, it is the 'light of truthful enlightenment'. So, in short, only two ways exist to have a divine vision of God—viz. one is to pursue the path of Bhakti encapsulated in the first line of verse no. 53, and the other is by having light of

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enlightenment as envisaged in the second line of the same verse no. 53 by pursuing the teachings of the Upanishads, the path known as Gyan. The choice between the two depends upon the mental caliber of the spiritual seeker or aspirant, or to use a clichÈ, the strength of the seeker's radar to catch hold of the Lord's true image on the screen of his heart and mind.]

अथवा द्रष्टुमिच्छा ते शृणु त्वं परमेश्वरम्। त्रेतायुगे स देवेशो भविता नृपविग्रहः।। 54।।
हितार्थं देवमर्त्यानामिक्ष्वाकूणां कुले हरिः। रामो दाशरथिर्भूत्वा महासत्त्वपराक्रमः।।55।।

athavā draṣṭumicchā te śṛṇu tvaṃ parameśvaram/
tretāyuge sa deveśo bhavitā nṛpavigrahaḥ//
hitārthaṃ devamartyānāmikṣvākūṇāṃ kule hariḥ/
rāmo dāśarathirbhūtvā mahāsattvaparākramaḥ//

[Sage Sanatkumar advices Ravana as follows—]

Now, listen—if you indeed have a sincere desire to have a holy vision of the supreme Lord (i.e. of the supreme transcendental Soul), then that Lord of Gods shall manifest (take birth) in the body (form) of a king (54) for the benefit and welfare of both the Gods as well as the humans in the clan of king Ikshwaku as the son of Dashrath. Then, in that form, Sri Hari (Vishnu) shall be called Sri Ram who shall be most truthful, righteous, noble, mighty, powerful, valiant, valorous, famous and glorious in all respects (55).

पितुर्नियोगात्स भ्रात्रा भार्यया दण्डके वने। विचरिष्यति धर्मात्मा जगन्मात्रा स्वमायया।।56।।
एवं ते सर्वमाख्यातं मया रावण विस्तरात्। भजस्व भक्तिभावेन सदा रामं श्रिया युतम्।।57।।

piturniyogātsa bhrātā bhāryayā daṇḍake vane/
vicariṣyati dharmātmā jagannmātrā svamāyayā//
evaṃ te sarvamākhyātaṃ mayā rāvaṇa vistarāt/
bhajasva bhaktibhāvena sadā rāmaṃ śriyā yutam//

That righteous and noble Lord shall, on the instructions of his father, wander in the forest called Dandakaranya along with his brother (Laxman) and consort (Sita) who is, in reality, the mother of all creation as well as the manifest form of the Lord's deluding powers called Maya (56).

Oh Ravana! In this way, I have told you the essential facts in detail. Now you should constantly worship and adore (i.e. remember and have faith in) Sri Ram along with his divine consort Laxmi with sincerity of devotion and conviction, faith and belief' (57).

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अगस्त्य उवाच

एवं श्रुत्वासुराध्यक्षो ध्यात्वा किञ्चिद्विचार्य च। त्वया सह विरोधेप्सुर्मुमुदे रावणो महान्।।58।।
युद्धार्थी सर्वतो लोकान् पर्यटन् समवस्थितः। एतदर्थं महाराज रावणोऽतीव बुद्धिमान्।
हृतवान् जानकीं देवीं त्वयात्मवधकाङ्क्षया।।59।।

agastya uvāca

evaṃ śrutvāsurādhyakṣo dhyātvā kiñcidvicārya ca/
tvayā saha virodhepsurmumude rāvaṇo mahān//
yuddhārthī sarvato lokān paryaṭan samavasthitaḥ/
etadarthaṃ mahārāja rāvaṇo'tīva buddhimān/
hṛtavān jānakīṃ devīṃ tvayātmavadhakāṅkṣayā//

Sage Agastya said to Sri Ram, 'Oh Sri Ram! After hearing what Sanatkumar had told him, the king of demons, the great Ravana, pondered over it for some time and finally decided to pretend to have (artificial, superficial) enmity with you, and having decided thus (i.e. to pretend to be your enemy), he felt extremely glad and delighted (see note below) (58). He (Ravana) roamed about in this whole world eager for battle with you. Oh great king (Sri Ram)! The wisest Ravana had abducted/stolen goddess Sita purposely with the express desire to get killed at your hands (59).

[Note :—Ravana was extremely glad and delighted because it was an easy way for him to achieve emancipation and salvation with a body of a demon destined to do evil deeds and follow unrighteous path and never having any remote chance of finding emancipation and salvation. By opposing Sri Ram, he will have cleverly played his part of the drama as an evil demon to perfection even as Sri Ram had played his own part as a human being. Ravana was spared the trouble of severe hardships undergone by sages and hermits when they did severe Tapa (austerities and penances), performed many Yagyas (so many religious sacrifices and observance of religious sacraments and vows), and renounced the comforts of the world to become mendicants and recluses living in forests and other lonely places. He was also spared the hardships of following the path of Bhakti for then he would have to follow a path of righteousness and devotion for Lord God which will not be in consonant with his body and nature of a demon and the scheme of things. He chose the easier path whereby he can recklessly enjoy the comforts of his body and the sensual pleasures that the world enticingly offered to him, while at the same time ensuring his salvation. This is clearly evident on numerous occasions when the near and dear ones of Ravana (i.e. Vibhishan, Mandodari, Kumbhakarn, the demon Kalnemi, Malyawan, Marich etc.)

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tried to rationalise with him and dissuade him from being reckless and belligerent, and instead make a compromise with Sri Ram before and even during the war, which Ravana brazenly and stubbornly refused, and remained steadfast in his determination in his pursuit of emancipation and salvation for his soul. Please refer to the following verses—(i) Aranya Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 58-61, (ii) Aranya Kand, Canto 6, verse nos. 30-32, (iii) Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 65, (iv) Lanka Kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 55-61.]

इमां कथां यः शृणुयात्पठेद्वा संश्रावयेद्वा श्रवणार्थिनां सदा।
आयुष्यमारोग्यमनन्तसौख्यं प्राप्नोति लाभं धनमक्षयं च।।60।।

imāṃ kathāṃ yaḥ śṛṇuyātpaṭhedvā
saṃśrāvayedvā śravaṇārthināṃ sadā /
āyuṣyamārogyamanantasaukhyaṃ
prāpnoti lābhaṃ dhanamakṣayaṃ ca //

Those persons who would read, listen to, narrate or describe this holy and divine story (pertaining to Lord Ram) to those who wish to here it shall be blessed with a long life, a disease free body, eternal and everlasting happiness, blissfulness, contentedness, peace and tranquility, and bestowed with desired rewards and gains as well as immense and measureless wealth (60).

***

Uttar Kand — Canto 4

Ravana in Shwet-Dwip; Description of Ram-Rajya; Gods' Prayer and Sita's exile to Valmiki's hermitage

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

एकदा ब्रह्मणो लोकादायान्तं नारदं मुनिम्। पर्यटन् रावणो लोकान्दृष्ट्वा नत्वाब्रवीद्वचः।।1।।
भगवन्ब्रूहि मे योद्धुं कुत्र सन्ति महाबलाः। योद्धुमिच्छामि बलिभिस्त्वं ज्ञातासि जगत्त्रयम्।।2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

ekadā brahmaṇo lokādāyāntaṃ nāradaṃ munim /
paryaṭan rāvaṇo lokāndṛṣṭvā natvābravīdvacaḥ //
bhagavanbrūhi me yoddhuṃ kutra santi mahābalāḥ /
yoddhumicchāmi balibhistvaṃ jñātāsi jagattrayam //

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Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! While wandering in the various worlds, one day Ravana saw the celestial sage Narad coming from the Loka (world, abode) of Lord Brahma. He bowed before the latter, and politely said to him (1), 'Oh Lord! I wish to have a duel with those who are very brave, strong and courageous. You are well acquainted with the three worlds (the celestial, terrestrial and subterranean worlds). So please tell me who is fit and strong enough to fight with me' (2).

मुनिर्ध्यात्वाह सुचिरं श्वेतद्वीपनिवासिनः। महाबला महाकायास्तत्र याहि महामते।। 3।।
विष्णुपूजारता ये वै विष्णुना निहताश्च ये। त एव तत्र सञ्जाता अजेयाश्च सुरासुरैः।। 4।।

munirdhyātvāha suciraṃ śvetadvīpanivāsinaḥ /
mahābalā mahākāyāstatra yāhi mahāmate //
viṣṇupūjāratā ye vai viṣṇunā nihatāśca ye /
ta eva tatra sañjātā ajeyāśca surāsuraiḥ //

The sage thought for a while and replied, 'Oh the wise one! Inhabitants of an island called 'Shwet Dwip' (literally, the island inhabited by fair-skinned people) are very strong and have robust, huge and powerful bodies. You should go there (3). Those who constantly (regularly and consistently) worship and adore Lord Vishnu or those who had been killed by him earlier with his own hands—they are the only ones who have taken birth there. They cannot be won or subdued by anyone, either by the Gods or by the demons' (4).

श्रुत्वा तद्रावणो वेगान्मन्त्रिभिः पुष्पकेण तान्। योद्धुकामः समागत्य श्वेतद्वीपसमीपतः।। 5।।
तत्प्रभाहततेजस्कं पुष्पकं नाचलत्ततः। त्यक्त्वा विमानं प्रययौ मन्त्रिणश्च दशाननः।। 6।।

śrutvā tadrāvaṇo vegānmantribhiḥ puṣpakeṇa tān /
yoddhukāmaḥ samāgatya śvetadvīpasamīpataḥ //
tatprabhāhatatejaskaṃ puṣpakaṃ nācalattataḥ /
tyaktvā vimānaṃ prayayau mantriṇaśca daśānanaḥ //

Hearing this, Ravana, along with his ministers, immediately boarded the plane called Pushpak and went near the island called Shwet Dwip (5). The plane lost its flying powers in the face of a brilliant radiation emanating from that island. So Ravana left the plane and the ministers behind, and went ahead on his own (6).

प्रविशन्नेव तद्द्वीपं धृतो हस्तेन योषिता। पृष्टश्च त्वं कुतः कोऽसि प्रेषितः केन वा वद।। 7।।
इत्युक्तो लीलया स्त्रीभिर्हसन्तीभिः पुनः पुनः। कृच्छ्राद्धस्ताद्विनिर्मुक्तस्तासां स्त्रीणां दशाननः।। 8।।

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praviśanneva taddvīpaṃ dhṛto hastena yoṣitā /
pṛṣṭaśca tvaṃ kutaḥ ko'si preṣitaḥ kena vā vada //
ityukto līlayā strībhirhasantībhiḥ punaḥ punaḥ /
kṛcchrāddhastādvinirmuktastāsāṃ strīṇāṃ daśānanaḥ //

As soon as he entered the island, a woman caught hold of his hands and asked, 'Tell me who you are? Where have you come from? Who has sent you here?' (7).

In this manner, many women joked and poked fun at him, and he managed to free himself from them with great difficulty (8).

आश्चर्यमतुलं लब्ध्वा चिन्तयामास दुर्मतिः। विष्णुना निहतो यामि वैकुण्ठमिति निश्चितः।।9।।
मयि विष्णुर्यथा कुप्येत्तथा कार्यं करोम्यहम्। इति निश्चित्य वैदेहीं जहार विपिनेऽसुरः।।10।।
जानन्नेव परात्मानं स जहारावनीसुताम्। मातृवत्पालयामास त्वत्तः कांक्षन्वधं स्वकम्।।11।।

āścaryamatulaṃ labdhvā cintayāmāsa durmatiḥ /
viṣṇunā nihato yāmi vaikuṇṭhamiti niścitaḥ //
mayi viṣṇuryathā kupyettathā kāryaṃ karomyaham /
iti niścitya vaidehīṃ jahāra vipine'suraḥ //
jānanneva parātmānaṃ sa jahārāvanīsutām /
mātṛvatpālayāmāsa tvattaḥ kāṅkṣanvadhaṃ svakam //

He was extremely embarrassed, perturbed and astonished at seeing all this, and that wicked fellow thought to himself, 'I shall die at the hands of Vishnu and be sure to go to Vaikunth (the abode of Lord Vishnu) (9). So I must do something which will enrage/incite Vishnu against me'. That demon had stolen (abducted) Vaidehi (Sita) from the forest because of this decision (10). Oh Sri Ram! Desirous of getting himself killed at your hands, he had purposely abducted Sita and looked after her as if she was his own mother while she was in his captivity though he knew, while taking her away, that you are not an ordinary human but the supreme Soul, the Lord Vishnu personified himself (and, therefore, Sita was the divine goddess Laxmi herself) (11).

[Note :—(i) The fact that he kept Sita with due regard to her as his own mother and divine goddess is also clear earlier in Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse 65. Please also refer to my note in verse no. 58, Canto 3 of Uttar Kand.

(ii) Verse no. 9-11 describe the first-hand experience of Ravana as to what sort of place he expects to live in if he dies at the hands of Vishnu; see

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verse nos. 3-4. So, he became all the more determined to brazenly follow his chosen path of confrontation with Vishnu, because he thought that even if emancipation, deliverance and salvation was not possible for him inspite of dying at the hands of Vishnu due to the treasury of sins and misdeeds that he has accumulated, then at least he will enjoy life 'King-size' in this Shwet-Dwip! He had sweets in both his hands—either he would be liberated and delivered if slayed by Vishnu, or else he would at least live a life of pleasures in Shwet Dwip without the accompanying hassles of being accused of doing anything unrighteous while enjoying a life which suited his temperament well.]

राम त्वं परमेश्वरोऽसि सकलं जानासि विज्ञानदृग्
भूतं भव्यमिदं त्रिकालकलनासाक्षी विकल्पोज्झिताः।
भक्तानामनुवर्तनाय सकलां कुर्वन क्रियासंहतिं
त्वं शृण्वन्मनुजाकृतिर्मुनिवचो भासीश लोकार्चितः॥12॥

rāma tvaṃ parameśvaro'si sakalaṃ jānāsi vijñānadṛg
bhūtaṃ bhavyamidaṃ trikālakalanāsākṣī vikalpojjhitaḥ /
bhaktānāmanuvartanāya sakalāṃ kurvan kriyāsaṃhatiṃ
tvaṃ śṛṇvanmanujākṛtirmunivaco bhāsīśa lokārcitaḥ //

Oh Sri Ram! You are the supreme Lord. You are able to see and know, without any doubts and confusions, about the past, the present as well as the future with the help of your transcendental vision, your penetrating and deep insight, and your divine wisdom empowered with enlightenment, true knowledge and mystical powers. You are the witness to all that is happening. You conjure up a magical theatre in which you play out all your strange and mysterious plays, all your illusive games, performing all your maverick tricks doing so many myriad deeds and taking so many actions, in order to show the path (of righteousness, probity, propriety, morality, ethics and noble conduct) to your devotees and followers.

You are adored, honoured and worshipped by the whole world, but still you, disguised in the form of a human being, appear to hear the words spoken by sages and saints like us most respectfully'. [That is, you are enlightened and know everything in this world, but still, just to show respect to us, you listen to what the sages, seers, saints and ascetics have to say. You pretend to ask them and learn from them, but that is your grace and munificence upon us. In reality, there is nothing that you do not know.] (12).

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स्तुत्वैवं राघवं तेन पूजितः कुम्भसम्भवः। स्वाश्रमं मुनिभिः सार्धं प्रययौ हृष्टमानसः।। 13।।
रामस्तु सीतया सार्धं भ्रातृभिः सह मन्त्रिभिः। संसारीव रमानाथो रममाणोऽवसद्गृहे।।14।।

stutvaivaṃ rāghavaṃ tena pūjitaḥ kumbhasambhavaḥ /
svāśramaṃ munibhiḥ sārdhaṃ prayayau hṛṣṭamānasaḥ //
rāmastu sītayā sārdhaṃ bhrātṛbhiḥ saha mantribhiḥ /
saṃsārīva ramānātho ramamāṇo'vasadgṛhe //

In this way, having praised and honoured Raghav and being reciprocated similarly by him, sage Agastya, along with other sages accompanying him, went back to their respective hermitages with a cheerful mind (13).

Sri Ram—who is Lord of Laxmi—began living like an ordinary human in this world accompanied by his brothers, Sita and ministers (14).

अनासक्तोऽपि विषयान्बुभुजे प्रियया सह। हनुमत्प्रमुखैः सद्भिर्वानरैः परिवेष्टितः।। 15।।
पुष्पकं चागमद्रामामेकदा पूर्ववत्प्रभुम्। प्राह देव कुबेरेण प्रेषितं त्वामहं ततः।।16।।

anāsakto'pi viṣayānbubhuje priyayā saha /
hanumatpramukhaiḥ sadbhirvānaraiḥ pariveṣṭitaḥ //
puṣpakaṃ cāgamadrāmamekadā pūrvavatprabhum /
prāha deva kubereṇa preṣitaṃ tvāmahaṃ tataḥ //

Though he is dispassionate and a renunciate par excellence, but since he was playing the role of a human, he enjoyed worldly life and its pleasures in the company of his dear wife. He was always surrounded (i.e. was accompanied by) Hanuman and other senior (chief) monkeys (15).

Once, the Pushpak plane came back to Sri Ram once again as it had done previously (in the battle field at Lanka), and said, 'Oh Lord! Kuber has sent me once again at your service (16).

जितं त्वं रावणेनादौ पश्चाद्रामेण निर्जितम्। अतस्त्वं राघवं नित्यं वह यावद्वसेद्भुवि।। 17।।
यदा गच्छेद्रघुश्रेष्ठो वैकुण्ठं याहि मां तदा। तच्छ्रुत्वा राघवः प्राह पुष्पकं सूर्यसन्निभम्।।18।।

jitaṃ tvaṃ rāvaṇenādau paścādrāmeṇa nirjitam /
atastvaṃ rāghavaṃ nityaṃ vaha yāvadvasedbhuvi //
yadā gacchedraghuśreṣṭho vaikuṇṭhaṃ yāhi māṃ tadā /
tacchrutvā rāghavaḥ prāha puṣpakaṃ sūryasannibham //

(Kuber had told me that—) 'First, you (the Pushpak plane) had

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been won over by Ravana, and then Sri Ram has conquered you (after slaying the demon at Lanka). Hence, as long as he stays on the surface of the earth, you must regularly be with him at his service as his carrier (17). At the time when the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) goes to his heavenly abode called Vaikunth (at the end of his worldly sojourn), you can come back to me then'. Hearing these words, Raghav (Sri Ram) said to Pushpak who was as splendorous as the sun (18)—

यदा स्मरामि भद्रं ते तदागच्छ ममान्तिकम्। तिष्ठान्तर्धाय सर्वत्र गच्छेदानीं ममाज्ञया।। 19।।
इत्युक्त्वा रामचन्द्रोऽपि पौरकार्याणि सर्वशः। भ्रातृभिर्मन्त्रिभिः सार्धं यथान्यायं चकार सः।।20।।

yadā smarāmi bhadraṃ te tadāgaccha mamāntikam /
tiṣṭhāntardhāya sarvatra gacchedānīṃ mamājñayā //
ityuktvā rāmacandro'pi paurakāryāṇi sarvaśaḥ /
bhrātṛbhirmantribhiḥ sārdhaṃ yathānyāyaṃ cakāra saḥ //

'Oh you gentleman[1]! Come to me whenever I remember (or need and wish to see) you. For the rest of the time, you must go from here on my orders and roam about everywhere in an invisible form' (19). Having given these instructions to the Pushpak plane, Sri Ram started looking after all the routine affairs of the kingdom aided by his brothers and ministers, in a most righteous manner in accordance with rules of probity, propriety, law, morality, ethics and polity (20).

[Note :—[1]Verse nos. 16-19 tell us how Pushpak was always present at the beck and call of Sri Ram whenever he required its services. The fact that Sri Ram addressed the plane as a 'gentleman' shows that he was addressing a person and not a machine. In ancient Puranic folklore, this was a usual pattern or style of narration wherein lifeless objects were treated as if they had life. Another explanation may be that the plane had a pilot who was also named Pushpak after the name of the plane of which he was in charge.]

राघवे शासति भुवं लोकनाथे रमापतौ। वसुधा सस्यसम्पन्ना फलवन्तश्च भूरुहाः।। 21।।
जना धर्मपराः सर्वे पतिभक्तिपराः स्त्रियः। नापश्यत्पुत्रमरणं कश्चिद्राजनि राघवे।। 22।।
समारुह्य विमानाग्र्यं राघवः सीतया सह। वानरैर्भ्रातृभिः सार्धं सञ्चचारावनिं प्रभुः।। 23।।

rāghave śāsati bhuvaṃ lokanāthe ramāpatau /
vasudhā sasyasampannā phalavantaśca bhūruhāḥ //
janā dharmaparāḥ sarve patibhaktiparāḥ striyaḥ /
nāpaśyatputramaraṇaṃ kaścidrājani rāghave //
samāruhya vimānāgryaṃ rāghavaḥ sītayā saha /
vānarairbhrātṛbhiḥ sārdhaṃ sañcacārāvaniṃ prabhuḥ //

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During the reign of Raghav (Sri Ram)—who was the Lord of the world and the Lord of Laxmi (the goddess of wealth, prosperity and material well-being)—the earth was full of prosperity, material abundance and wealth, and the trees were laden with sweet and succulent fruits etc. [That is, there was no shortage of any kind.] (21).

During the reign of Raghav (Sri Ram), all the males followed the path of righteousness, noble conduct, morality, ethics, probity and propriety. The ladies were loyal to their husbands and served them diligently. No one had to suffer from the agony of seeing the death of one's son (22).

Raghav (Sri Ram) used to inspect the earth (i.e. survey it) aboard a plane (Pushpak) along with Sita, his brothers and selected monkeys (23).

अमानुषाणि कार्याणि चकार बहुशो भुवि। ब्राह्मणस्य सुतं दृष्ट्वा बालं मृतमकालतः॥ 24॥
शोचन्तं ब्राह्मणं चापि ज्ञात्वा रामो महामतिः। तपस्यन्तं वने शूद्रं हत्वा ब्राह्मणबालकम्॥25॥
जीवयामास शूद्रस्य ददौ स्वर्गमनुत्तमम्। लोकानामुपदेशार्थं परमात्मा रघूत्तमः॥ 26॥
कोटिशः स्थापयामास शिवलिङ्गानि सर्वशः। सीतां च रमयामास सर्वभोगैरमानुषैः॥27॥

amānuṣāṇi kāryāṇi cakāra bahuśo bhuvi/
brāhmaṇasya sutaṃ dṛṣṭvā bālaṃ mṛtamakālataḥ//
śocantaṃ brāhmaṇaṃ cāpi jñātvā rāmo mahāmatiḥ/
tapasyantaṃ vane śūdraṃ hatvā brāhmaṇabālakam//
jīvayāmāsa śūdrasya dadau svargamanuttamam/
lokānāmupadeśārthaṃ paramātmā raghūttamaḥ//
koṭiśaḥ sthāpayāmāsa śivaliṅgāni sarvaśaḥ/
sītāṃ ca ramayāmāsa sarvabhogairamānuṣaiḥ//

While on this earth, he performed many a super-human deeds (literally deeds or activities that cannot be done by any other ordinary man). Once, he saw the son of a Brahmin lying dead (24) and his father, the Brahmin, was submerged in extreme sorrows and anguish at the death of his son. Sri Ram—who was most wise—learnt that a Shudra (a low caste person) was the cause of the son's death and the Shudra was doing penances in the forest in order to atone for his sins. So, Sri Ram killed him (as punishment before he could finish his penances) and revived the Brahmin's son, but at the same time he gave the Shudra the most sought after abode in the heaven (as a reward for realising his error and doing penances to repent for his sin).

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The supreme soul and the best in the Raghu's clan that Sri Ram is, established millions of 'Shiva Lingams' everywhere in order to set an example for the people. He entertained Sita in various ways and provided her with all the possible comforts including those that are not possible for an ordinary human being (25-27).

[Note :—The first line of verse no. 27 shows that Sri Ram had laid the foundation of establishing Shiva temples in the country. Establishment of Shiva temples has an important implication. Shiva lingams are the only images or idols of any God which even an ordinary devotee—other than the Brahmin priest—can come close to and even touch in a temple's sanctum sanctorum. The subtle message which Sri Ram wished to apparently convey was towards equality to all and easy accessibility of the Lord to all classes and sections in the society. Shiva Lingams foster a closer bond between the Lord's representative symbol and his devotees. There should be no distinction between a priest and a non-priest as far as worshipping God is concerned, for all are his children and the all have an equal right to touch him. Whereas in other temple of other Gods, the worshipped idol is kept away from the reach of ordinary folks, but this is not the case with Shiva Lingams. This is the practice in Ayodhya and other northern parts of India even till today.

Another important message that was meant to be conveyed is that the Lord has a 'formless form', i.e. a form that cannot be ascribed certain characteristics as a hand or a leg or a head, for no one has ever seen how he looks and how his image should be moulded. A Shiva Lingam is designed simply as a hill-like mound surrounded by a disc, a symbol of something high rising out of flatness, where the former stands for outstanding virtues that stand out tall like the numeral one over the flatness representing nothing like the numeral zero. The Shiva Lingam, though being an image, has no forms either of a human or an animal or any plant. It metaphorically stands for the 'Nirgun' aspect of divinity.

There are other reasons also. One, the Lord had worshipped Shiva at the time of constructing the bridge over the ocean and at that time had praised Lord Shiva and his Lingams as is clear in Lanka Kand, canto 4, verse no.1-4. So, Sri Ram was reiterating his own commitment in worshipping Lord Shiva. Second, Lord Shiva is known as 'Rameshwar' or the Lord of Ram, and therefore he was worshipped by him. Thirdly, Sri Ram wished to honour Shiva for his victory over the demons, and to commemorate that stupendous achievement, he established numerous places of worship for the Lord Shiva.]

शशास रामो धर्मेण राज्यं परमधर्मवित्। कथां संस्थापयामास सर्वलोकमलापहाम्।। 28।।
दशवर्षसहस्राणि मायामानुषविग्रहः। चकार राज्यं विधिवल्लोकवन्द्यपदाम्बुजः।।29।।

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śaśāsa rāmo dharmeṇa rājyaṃ paramadharmavit /
kathāṃ saṃsthāpayāmāsa sarvalokamalāpahām //
daśavarṣasahasrāṇi māyāmānuṣavigrahaḥ /
cakāra rājyaṃ vidhivallokavandyapadāmbujaḥ //

In this manner, the most righteous Sri Ram ruled over the realm most righteously and in accordance with traditionally established, time tested and time honoured exemplary and stellar rules of noble conduct, morality, ethics, probity, propriety and polity. He firmly established for posterity his magnificent and majestic glory and good name, his stupendous fame and renown in the form of his divine stories, legends and lore which have the potential to remove all the sins, evils, misdeeds, misdemeanors, perversions, taints and blemishes that exist in the world along with their negative effects. [That is, his stories are a hallmark and a beacon light of righteousness and noble conduct to be emulated by all generations to come. By following these tenets and doctrines that he established for human kind, the earth would become as peaceful as it was during his times.] They laid the foundation of rightful, ethical and moral conduct and thoughts based on high values, and served as a living example for all to follow in future (28).

He, whose lotus-feet are worshipped and honoured by the three worlds, and who had assumed an illusive, false, human-like body, ruled for 10 thousand years, adhering to the sanctified code of conduct established by time honoured tradition (29).

एकपत्नीव्रतो रामो राजर्षिः सर्वदा शुचिः। गृहमेधीयमखिलमाचरन् शिक्षयन् जनान्।।30।।
सीता प्रेम्णानुवृत्या च प्रश्रयेण दमेन च। भर्तुर्मनोहरा साध्वी भावज्ञा सा ह्रिया भिया।।31।।

ekapatnīvrato rāmo rājarṣiḥ sarvadā śuciḥ /
gṛhamedhīyamakhilamācaran śikṣayan janān //
sītā premṇānuvṛttyā ca praśrayeṇa damena ca /
bharturmanoharā sādhvī bhāvajñā sā hriyā bhiyā //

The sage amongst kings, Sri Ram, adhered to and followed rigidly the vow of having only a single wife. He was always righteous, incorruptible and pure in character. He set an example of his own life for the subjects of the kingdom to emulate. He followed, lived up to and implemented all the set norms (codes of conduct) for a house-holder (30).

The chaste and virtuous Sita too followed the wishes of the Lord.

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She had won over the heart of her husband by her affections, obedience, service, politeness, self-restraint, etiquette, good manners, humility, shyness and submissiveness as well as other such virtuous positive qualities befitting an honourable housewife who can exert influence over her husband by way of devotion, love and affection for him (31).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 21-31 describe the reign of Sri Ram in brief. The first line of verse no. 30 describes Sri Ram as a 'sage amongst kings'. This has myriad ramifications—it shows that though outwardly he was a king and an emperor, enjoying the pleasures that come with such a large and prosperous kingdom, internally he was deeply renunciate, dispassionate and detached from the surrounding world. He remained like a sage even while being surrounded by grandeur, pomp and pageantry.

(ii) Description of Sri Ram's reign is also found in Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse nos. 27-34.]

एकदाक्रीडाविपिने सर्वभोगसमन्विते। एकान्ते दिव्यभवने सुखासीनं रघूत्तमम्।। 32।।
नीलमाणिक्यसङ्काशं दिव्याभरणभूषितम्। प्रसन्नवदनं शान्तं विद्युत्पुञ्जनिभाम्बरम्।। 33।।
सीता कमलपत्राक्षी सर्वाभरणभूषिता। राममाह कराभ्यां सा लालयन्ती पदाम्बुजे।। 34।।

ekadākrīḍavipine sarvabhogasamanvite /
ekānte divyabhavane sukhāsīnaṃ raghūttamam //
nīlamāṇikyasaṅkāśaṃ divyābharaṇabhūṣitam /
prasannavadanaṃ śāntaṃ vidyutpuñjanibhāmbaram //
sītā kamalapatrākṣī sarvābharaṇabhūṣitā /
rāmamāha karābhyāṃ sā lālayantī padāmbuje //

One day, the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) was sitting alone at ease in his royal palace situated in the royal gardens and which had all the imaginable and magnificent paraphernalia of grandeur and comfort (32). The radiant and glowing hue of his body resembled a blue gem (Sapphire), he was adorned by magnificent ornaments and royal robes, he looked very contented and pleased as well as peaceful, tranquil and serene. He was wearing a Pitambar (a body-wrapping, seamless, yellow silk cloth worn by Vishnu) which dazzled like electric (33). At that time, Sita, who was adorned with the best of ornaments and clothes and whose eyes were like the petals of a lotus flower, was serving the lotus-like holy feet of Sri Ram with her red lotus-like hands (34).

देवदेव जगन्नाथ परमात्मन्सनातन। चिदानन्दादिमध्यान्तरहिताशेषकारण।। 35।।

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देव देवाः समासाद्य मामेकान्तेऽब्रुवन्वचः। बहुशोऽर्थयमानास्ते वैकुण्ठागमनं प्रति।।36।।

devadeva jagannātha paramātmansanātana/
cidānandādimadhyāntarahitāśeṣakāraṇa //
deva devāḥ samāsādya māmekānte'bruvanvacaḥ/
bahuśo'rthayamānāste vaikuṇṭhāgamanaṃ prati//

Sita said, 'Oh the Lord of lords! Oh the Lord of the creation! Oh the truthful, eternal, almighty supreme Soul! Oh an image of supreme, eternal, everlasting bliss, joy, delight, happiness, peace and tranquility! You are without a beginning, a present or an end. You are the cause (essence) of all (animate and inanimate, visible and invisible world) (35). Oh Lord! The Gods came to me when I was alone and pleaded with me (or prayed to me) about the necessity of your going back to your eternal, supreme abode called Vaikunth (36).

त्वया समेतश्चिच्छक्त्या रामस्तिष्ठति भूतले। विसृज्यास्मान्स्वकं धाम वैकुण्ठं च सनातनम्।।37।।
आस्ते त्वया जगद्धात्रि रामः कमललोचनः। अग्रतो याहि वैकुण्ठं त्वं तथा चेद्रघूत्तमः।।38।।
आगमिष्यति वैकुण्ठं सनाथान्नः करिष्यति। इति विज्ञापिताहं तैर्मया विज्ञापितो भवान्।।39।।

tvayā sametaścicchaktyā rāmastiṣṭhati bhūtale/
visṛjyāsmānsvakaṃ dhāma vaikuṇṭhaṃ ca sanātanam//
āste tvayā jagaddhātri rāmaḥ kamalalocanaḥ/
agrato yāhi vaikuṇṭhaṃ tvaṃ tathā cedraghūttamaḥ//
āgamiṣyati vaikuṇṭhaṃ sanāthānnaḥ kariṣyati/
iti vijñāpitāhaṃ tairmayā vijñāpito bhavān//

They said to me, 'It is because you (Sita) have so wished (literally, it is the power of your wish) that Sri Ram continues to stay on this earth leaving behind us as well as his own eternal abode in Vaikunth (37). Oh the revered mother of the world! The lotus eyed Sri Ram always stays alongside you (i.e. he and you are inseparable). If you go to Vaikunth first, then the most exalted in the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) (38) will naturally follow suit (i.e. shall also follow you to Vaikunth). This will be a great blessing for all of us and we shall be very fortunate in having him (Sri Ram) in our midst in the heaven'. They (the Gods) said this to me and I have told you all verbatim (literally, I have brought to light and bring to your knowledge everything as it happened) (39).

[Note :—Verse nos. 35-39 highlight the reason why Sri Ram had to abandon Sita the second time and send her to exile in the hermitage of sage Valmiki so that she can, on some worldly pretext, make her final

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exit from this earth, thereby allowing Sri Ram to himself wind up his worldly existence and return to his eternal abode in the heavens.

Sita is the personification of the divine cosmic energy, called Shakti, which does everything on behalf of Brahm. On close study we would observe that earlier also it was she who had taken the initiative and had proceeded ahead of the Lord. In this context there is the episode at the time of the Lord's exile when Sri Ram was trying to persuade Sita not to go with him to the forest; at that time she had expressly stated that she would go first and had asked Sri Ram to follow her (Ayodhya Kand, canto 4, verse no.62-63. Similarly, when the Lord was about to board the chariot on his way to the forest, at that time also it was she who had taken the first step and asked Sri Ram to follow her (see Ayodhya Kand, canto 5, verse no.43). Then again, when they were about to cross the river Ganges, it was she once again who first stepped into the boat (Ayodhya Kand, canto 6, verse no.19).]

यद्युक्तं तत्कुरुष्वाद्य नाहमाज्ञापये प्रभो। सीतायास्तद्वचः श्रुत्वा रामो ध्यात्वाब्रवीत्क्षणम्।। 40 ।।
देवि जानामि सकलं तत्रोपायं वदामि ते। कल्पयित्वा मिषं देवि लोकवादं त्वदाश्रयम्।।41 ।।
त्यजामि त्वां वने लोकवादाद्भीत इवापरः। भविष्यतः कुमारौ द्वौ वाल्मीकेराश्रमान्तिके।।42 ।।

yadyuktaṃ tatkuruṣvādya nāhamājñāpaye prabho/
sītāyāstadvacaḥ śrutvā rāmo dhyātvābravītkṣaṇam//
devi jānāmi sakalaṃ tatropāyaṃ vadāmi te/
kalpayitvā miṣaṃ devi lokavādaṃ tvadāśrayam//
tyajāmi tvāṃ vane lokavādādbhīta ivāparaḥ/
bhaviṣyataḥ kumārau dvau vālmīkerāśramāntike//

Oh Lord! I am not ordering you or even advising you on anything. You must do as you think fit and proper'. Hearing these words of Sita, Sri Ram pondered over them for some time, and then said (40), 'Oh goddess! I know everything. To achieve this, I shall tell your how to go about it (or, I shall advise you to do as follows). On the imaginary pretext of some blemish or aspersion relevant to your character, I shall publicly censor, reproach and rebuke you (41). And like an ordinary righteous man who fears ignominy, censor and castigation by the society, I shall forsake you and leave you in the forest (i.e. I shall send you in exile to the forest). There, near the hermitage of sage Valmiki, you will be blessed with two sons (42).

इदानीं दृश्यते गर्भः पुनरागत्य मेऽन्तिकम्। लोकानां प्रत्ययार्थं त्वं कृत्वा शपथमादरात्।। 43 ।।
भूमेर्विवरमात्रेण वैकुण्ठं यास्यसि द्रुतम्। पश्चादहं गमिष्यामि एष एव सुनिश्चयः।। 44 ।।

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idānīṃ dṛśyate garbhaḥ punarāgatya me'ntikam /
lokānāṃ pratyayārthaṃ tvaṃ kṛtvā śapathamādarāt //
bhūmervivaramātreṇa vaikuṇṭhaṃ yāsyasi drutam /
paścādahaṃ gamiṣyāmi eṣa eva suniścayaḥ //

Presently, there are physical signs indicating that you are pregnant. (After the children have been born) you will once again come to visit me. Then, in order to convince the world about your integrity and purity, you will make a solemn vow (43), and then immediately you will go to Vaikunth through the deep cleavage (chasm or a deep pit) created in the earth when it splits into two at the surface. I will follow you soon. Now, this is the final plan that we shall adopt (i.e. implement) together' (44).

[Note—This shows that Sri Ram had taken Sita into confidence and it was a mutually agreed plan of action before the actual drama relating to Sita's second exile and the trauma that followed it unfolded before the world. We will recall that prior to her abduction by Ravana, Sri Ram had similarly discussed the plan with her in Aranya Kand, Canto 7, verse nos. 1-4.]

इत्युक्त्वा तां विसृज्याथ रामो ज्ञानैकलक्षणः। मन्त्रिभिर्मन्त्रतत्त्वज्ञैर्बलमुख्यैश्च संवृतः ।। 45 ।।
तत्रोपविष्टं श्रीरामं सुहृदः पर्युपासत। हास्यप्रौढकथासुज्ञा हासयन्तः स्थिता हरिम् ।। 46 ।।

ityuktvā tāṃ visṛjyātha rāmo jñānaikalakṣaṇaḥ /
mantribhirmantratattvajñairbalamukhyaiśca saṃvṛtaḥ //
tatrovaviṣṭaṃ śrīrāmaṃ suhṛdaḥ paryupāsata /
hāsyaprauḍhakathāsujñā hāsayantaḥ sthitā harim //

Saying this to her, Sri Ram who is characterised by immaculate virtuousness and wisdom, sent her to the interior of the palace and sat there surrounded by ministers and the chief commanders of his army who were wise and well versed in the laws of morality and ethics, probity and propriety (45). Well-wishers and subordinates were busy in his service while jokers and court jesters who were expert in their art were cracking humorous jokes and making everyone laugh (i.e. the atmosphere of the court was joyous and merry. There was not a trace of what calamity was impending, nor any hint of the decisions which Sri Ram has just taken a few moments earlier. This made the tragedy that follows all the more striking and stunning, almost like a bolt from the sky) (46).

कथाप्रसङ्गात्पप्रच्छ रामो विजयनामकम्। पौरा जानपदा मे किं वदन्तीह शुभाशुभम् ।। 47 ।।
सीतां वा मातरं वा मे भ्रातॄन्वा कैकयीमथ। ने भेतव्यं त्वया ब्रूहि शापितोऽसि ममोपरि ।। 48 ।।

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kathāprasaṅgātpapraccha rāmo vijayanāmakam /
paurā jānapadā me kiṃ vandatīha śubhāśubham //
sītāṃ vā mātaraṃ vā me bhrātṝnvā kaikayīmatha /
na bhetavyaṃ tvayā brūhi śapito'si mamopari //

Then, on some pretext, Sri Ram raised the issue of what his subjects of Ayodhya were saying about the royal family. He asked one messenger (a spy) named Vijai, 'Say, what do the denizens of the city say about me, Sita, my mother, my brothers or Kaikeyi. Do not be afraid to tell me the truth, I ask you on oath, whether what you say is good or bad to hear.[That is, do not be afraid to tell the truth.]' (47-48).

इत्युक्तः प्राह विजयो देव सर्वे वदन्ति ते। कृतं सुदुष्करं सर्वं रामेण विदितात्मना।। 49।।
किन्तु हत्वा दशग्रीवं सीतामाहृत्य राघवः। अमर्षं पृष्ठतः कृत्वा स्वं वेश्म प्रत्यपादयत्।।50।।

ityuktaḥ prāha vijayo deva sarve vadanti te /
kṛtaṃ suduṣkaraṃ sarvaṃ rāmeṇa viditātmanā //
kintu hatvā daśagrīvaṃ sītāmāhṛtya rāghavaḥ /
amarṣaṃ pṛṣṭhataḥ kṛtvā svaṃ veśma pratyapādayat //

When he asked this, Vijai replied, 'Oh Lord! Everyone concedes that the deeds done by the enlightened and wise Sri Ram are very formidable and difficult to do; they are indeed glorious and magnificent (49). But he has killed Ravana and then had brought Sita along with him from Lanka (i.e. accepted her) without having any doubts or second thoughts (about her integrity and purity). [Well, the people imply that this was not proper conduct befitting a righteous king whose wife has been in the captivity of his enemy for a long time.] (50).

कीदृशं हृदये तस्य सीतासम्भोगजं सुखम्। या हृता विजनेऽरण्ये रावणेन दुरात्मना।। 51।।
अस्माकमपि दुष्कर्म योषितां मर्षणं भवेत्। यादृग्भवति वै राजा तादृश्यो नियतं प्रजाः।।52।।

kīdṛśaṃ hṛdaye tasya sītāsambhogajaṃ sukham /
yā hṛtā vijane'raṇye rāvaṇena durātmanā //
asmākamapi duṣkarma yoṣitāṃ marṣaṇaṃ bhavet /
yādṛgbhavati vai rājā tādṛśyo niyataṃ prajāḥ //

Well, what joy and happiness does he (Sri Ram) find in his heart enjoying her company knowing fully well that she had been stolen/ abducted in the lonely forest by the devilish and wicked Ravana (who

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was a renowned pervert demon, a promiscuous and lascivious creature)? (51). As a result, we will also have to cope with (i.e. tolerate, bear with) the misdemeanors and misdeeds of our own wives because the subjects have to follow the example set by their king' (52).

[Note :—Notwithstanding the fact that Sri Ram was the divine Lord, all-knowing and immaculately perfect, and that all that was happening was a pre-planned course of action decided by none other than the Lord himself in consultation with Sita, his divine consort and the primeval cosmic Shakti (energy and authority) personified, still it is very obvious that this was one slip he did make in his role of a human being. Though it is a truth that Sri Ram had thought exactly what the citizens were saying now and he had subjected Sita to the acid test by fire to establish her purity, chastity, loyalty and integrity beyond a shadow of doubt as is evident in Lanka Kand, Canto 12, verse nos. 75-84, but he overlooked one very important aspect—and that is, besides Laxman, there was not a single witness from Ayodhya to the fire test in the battle field of Lanka. That fire test should have been done publicly in a central stadium of the city of Ayodhya and not at Lanka to preempt this kind of accusation that is being leveled by the citizens now. This incident shows that no matter what one does to prove his integrity, it is difficult to please this world.

Secondly, Sri Ram needed an excuse to end his worldly sojourn and he did not want to prolong it any further, for otherwise he could have done the fire test again at Ayodhya to settle the matter once and for all. It would have not harmed even a single hair of Sita simply because she was indeed pure—it is certain that she would have emerged unscathed from the fire even as gold gets purer when put in fire repeatedly. But that would have set a bad precedent for then some one else would have level some other wild charge and the process would continue without an end with the Lord trying to prove his innocence umpteen number of times. It was a piquant situation; for in the eventuality Sri Ram had decided to carry out the second fire test of Sita, then it would be necessary to apply this test to all the womenfolk in Ayodhya in order to maintain decorum and dignity of a king whose queen is publicly forced to prove her bonafides. To straighten things out, Sri Ram would have then ordered all the women of Ayodhya to prove their own chastity or their husbands would face the death penalty for raising the stink against their own chaste and loyal queen. This humble author firmly believes that quite a proportion of the population would have failed the fire test. That would have been a proper lesson for those with a foul, pervert and wicked mind, but it would have disastrous consequences for Ayodhya.

But it was not to be so. Besides the fact that Sri Ram himself wished to send Sita to exile prior to her ultimate exit from this world as in verse nos. 35-44 of this Canto, he was also aware of the above fact. He, being a

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merciful, benevolent and gracious king, did not wish to be harsh on his subjects as suggested above.

Sri Ram knew that if he kept quiet, there would be thousands of tongues wagging, and if he tried to subject the citizens of Ayodhya to the purity test, then quite a lot of them would perish. He was not a tyrant, a despot. He could not throw the populace ruthlessly to the gallows for uttering such words against him and Sita. What better example can be set of bowing to the wishes of his subjects and accepting that he had indeed made a serious mistake by accepting Sita under given set of circumstances even at the cost of the catastrophe that it would lead to? Another lesson that we learn from this episode is that no matter how upright you are, this vicious, skeptic, jealous and suspicious world will always find a hole to prick at in your character. So, the best way is to ignore the comments of foolish people and move on with life.

Thirdly, it was probably Tara's (Vaali's wife) curse at the time of killing of her husband Vaali by Sri Ram that lead to the development of such circumstances that Sri Ram was made to suffer the agony of final separation from his beloved wife Sita. See Tara's lamentations in Kishkindha Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 4-11. If the curse of blind parents of Shrawan Kumar who was shot inadvertently by Dashrath could lead to the latter's death due to the agony of separation from Ram-Laxman-Sita at the time of the trio's exile (Ayodhya Kand, canto 7, verse no.20-48) then it's no wonder that Tara's curse, though not explicitly made but implicit in her lamentations, would surely show its effects, because Tara was considered a noble, chaste and loyal lady.

Fourthly, there is a story that Sita had kept a male parrot as a pet. Its female companion had pleaded with her to set free her male companion but Sita didn't, at which the she-parrot cursed her that she will also suffer separation from her beloved in future.]

श्रुत्वा तद्वचनं रामः स्वजनान्पर्यपृच्छत। तेऽपि नत्वाब्रुवन् राममेवमेतन्न संशयः।। 53।।
ततो विसृज्य सचिवान्विजयं सुहृदस्तथा। आहूय लक्ष्मणं रामो वचनं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 54।।
लोकापवादस्तु महान्सीतामाश्रित्य मेऽभवत्। सीतां प्रातः समानीय वाल्मीकेराश्रमान्तिके।।55।।
त्यक्त्वा शीघ्रं रथेन त्वं पुनरायाहि लक्ष्मण। वक्ष्यसे यदि वा किञ्चित्तदा मां हतवानसि।।56।।

śrutvā tadvacanaṃ rāmaḥ svajanānparyapṛcchata /
te'pi natvābruvan rāmamevametanna saṃśayaḥ //
tato visṛjya sacivānvijayaṃ suhṛdastathā /
āhūya lakṣmaṇaṃ rāmo vacanaṃ cedamabravīt //
lokāpavādastu mahānsītāmāśritya me'bhavat /
sītāṃ prātaḥ samānīya vālmīkerāśramāntike //
tyaktvā śīghraṃ rathena tvaṃ punarāyāhi lakṣmaṇa /
vakṣyase yadi vā kiñcittadā māṃ hatavānasi //

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Hearing his words, Sri Ram consulted his near and dear ones. All of them bowed before him and said that it was indeed the truth (53).

Thereafter, Sri Ram dismissed his ministers, Vijai (the messenger or spy) and other compatriots, and then called in Laxman and said to him (54), 'Oh brother! I am being subjected to scandalous gossip, ignominy, scorn, reproach, ridicule and public censor because of Sita. Hence, early morning tomorrow, you must take Sita on a chariot and leave her near the hermitage of sage Valmiki. If you say anything (i.e. resist or comment) in this matter, it will be tantamount to killing me. [That is, you must keep it top secret, do not tell even Sita why you are taking her away. Besides this, do not refuse to do so and disobey me. And neither should you do anything that will create a fuss.]' (55-56).

इत्युक्तो लक्ष्मणो भीत्या प्रातरुत्थाय जानकीम्। सुमन्त्रेण रथे कृत्वा जगाम सहसा वनम्।।57।।
वाल्मीकेराश्रमस्यान्ते त्यक्त्वा सीतामुवाच सः। लोकापवादभीत्या त्वां त्यक्तवान् राघवो वने।।58।।

ityukto lakṣmaṇo bhītyā prātarutthāya jānakīm/
sumantreṇa rathe kṛtvā jagāma sahasā vanam//
vālimīkerāśramasyānte tyaktvā sītāmuvāca saḥ/
lokāpavādabhītyā tvāṃ tyaktavān rāghavo vane//

At this, Laxman became horrified, dumbfounded and absolutely distraught. [But he had no choice, so—] As soon as it was day break, he asked Sumantra to get the chariot ready, took Sita along and headed for the forest (57). As soon as they reached the hermitage of sage Valmiki, he made Sita alight from the chariot and said to her, 'Raghav (Sri Ram) has abandoned you in the forest fearing public reproach and censor (58).

दोषो न कश्चिन्मे मातर्गच्छाश्रमपदं मुनेः। इत्युक्त्वा लक्ष्मणः शीघ्रं गतवान् रामसन्निधिम्।।59।।
सीतापि दुःखसन्तप्ता विललापातिमुग्धवत्।
शिष्यैः श्रुत्वा च वाल्मीकिः सीतां ज्ञात्वा स दिव्यदृक्।।60।।

doṣo na kaścinme mātargacchāśramapadaṃ muneḥ/
ityuktvā lakṣmaṇaḥ śīghraṃ gatavān rāmasannidhim//
sītāpi duḥkhasantaptā vilalāpātimugdhavat/
śiṣyaiḥ śrutvā ca vālmīkiḥ sītāṃ jñātvā sa divyadṛk//

Oh mother! I am not at all at fault; I am not to be blamed for all this. Now you should go to the hermitage of the sage'. After that, Laxman returned back to Sri Ram immediately (59).

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At that time, Sita was overwhelmed with extreme shock, anguish, contrition and remorse, and began to lament woefully, helplessly and hopelessly like an ordinary foolish and ignorant woman. When sage Valmiki heard from his disciples that some woman is crying (outside the hermitage), he realised through his divine sight that it was Sita[7] (60).

अर्घ्यादिभिः पूजयित्वा समाश्वास्य च जानकीम्। ज्ञात्वा भविष्यं सकलामर्पयन्मुनियोषिताम्।।61।।
तास्तां सम्पूजयन्ति स्म सीतां भक्त्या दिने दिने। ज्ञात्वा परात्मनो लक्ष्मीं मुनिवाक्येन योषितः।
सेवां चक्रुः सदा तस्या विनयादिभिरादरात्।।62।।

arghyādibhiḥ pūjayitvā samāśvāsya ca jānakīm/
jñātvā bhaviṣyaṃ sakalāmarpayanmuniyoṣitām//
tāstāṃ sampūjayanti sma sītāṃ bhaktyā dine dine/
jñātvā parātmano lakṣmīṃ munivākyena yoṣitaḥ/
sevāṃ cakruḥ sadā tasyā vinayādibhirādarāt//

The sage knew what was to happen in the future. So he worshipped and honoured Sita by offering her oblations etc., consoled and reassured her, and put her in the care of other hermitresses (61). On the advise of the sage, they understood that Sita was the divine consort Laxmi of the supreme Lord (Vishnu), and so they honoured and worshipped her daily with great devotion and dedication, and always served her most politely, diligently and dutifully (62).

रामोऽपि सीतारहितः परात्मा विज्ञानदृक्केवल आदिदेवः।
सन्त्यज्य भोगानखिलान्विरक्तो मुनिव्रतोऽभून्मुनिसेविताङ्घ्रिः।।63।।

rāmo'pi sītārahitaḥ parātmā vijñānadṛkkevala ādidevaḥ/
santyajya bhogānakhilānvirakto munivrato'bhūnmunisevitāṅghriḥ//

Here meanwhile, having abandoned Sita, Sri Ram—who is the supreme transcendental Soul personified, who is the symbolic eye of wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment, who is matchless, unique, peerless and the only one of his kind, and who is the first among the Gods—also renounced all the comforts and enjoyments of this materialistic world and royal pomp and grandeur, and instead lived like a renunciate ascetic, monk or a hermit (63).

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Uttar Kand — Canto 5

Ram Gita

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

ततो जगन्मङ्गलमङ्गलात्मना विधाय रामायणकीर्तिमुत्तमाम्।
चचार पूर्वाचरितं रघूत्तमो राजर्षिवर्यैरभिसेवितं यथा।।1।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

tato jaganmaṅgalamaṅgalātmanā
vidhāya rāmāyaṇakīrtimuttamām /
cacāra pūrvācaritaṃ raghuttamo
rājarṣivaryairabhisevitaṃ yathā //

[This chapter called 'Ram Gita' should be read in conjunction with another of Lord Ram's preaching for Laxman in Aranya Kand, canto 4, verse no.16-55 to understand its full import. Other chapters which have various Gospels are also relevant in the context of the profound spiritual philosophy enunciated in this chapter. All of them are equally important as the 'truth' is always one and there are umpteen ways to explain it.]

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! After that incident (of Sita's exile to Valmiki's hermitage), the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)—who had assumed his glorious and divine body (as a human) for the welfare and well being of the world and had acted most righteously according to established traditions and principles established by the scriptures, thereby establishing his stupendous glory in the form of his legendary story called Ramayan—followed the path established and exemplified by the exalted, noble and renunciate kings in the past (1).

[Note :—Till the time he had left Sita, he lived the life of a householder king. After that, he became a renunciate as far as his household life was concerned, leading a frugal and austere lifestyle, almost like a royal hermit or an ascetic in royal garbs. At the same time he continued to perform his duties as a king and emperor without any laxity or negligence on his part. The dual role was very much in vogue amongst great kings of the period who combined the roles of a king and an ascetic or hermit with the greatest of ease, not letting one role interfere or impinge with the other. A shining example was king Janak, the father-in-law of Sri Ram, who was renowned as the wisest and enlightened king alive in those times who, though carrying out the daily duties of his kingdom diligently was nevertheless totally detached from the mundane world.]

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सौमित्रिणा पृष्ट उदारबुद्धिना रामः कथाः प्राह पुरातनीः शुभाः।
राज्ञः प्रमत्तस्य नृगस्य शापतो द्विजस्य तिर्यक्त्वमथाह राघवः।।2।।

saumitriṇā pṛṣṭa udārabuddhinā
rāmaḥ kathāḥ prāha purātanīḥ śubhāḥ /
rājñaḥ pramattasya nṛgasya śāpato
dvijasya tiryaktvamathāha rāghavaḥ //

When asked by the son of Sumitra (Laxman), who was of a broad outlook and had a munificent, generous and magnanimous nature, Sri Ram described to him magnificent ancient stories (from the Purans and other scriptures). In this context, Raghav (Sri Ram) told him the legendary story of king Nrig being cursed by a Brahmin and becoming a wriggling worm due to his stupidity and callousness resulting in his being negligent and indulging in careless deeds and behaviours (2).

कदाचिदेकान्त उपस्थितं प्रभुं रामं रमालालितपादपङ्कजम्।
सौमित्रिरासादितशुद्धभावनः प्रणम्य भक्त्या विनयान्वितोऽब्रवीत्।।3।।

kadācidekānta upasthitaṃ prabhuṃ
rāmaṃ ramālālitapādapaṅkajam /
saumitrirāsāditaśuddhabhāvanaḥ
praṇamya bhaktyā vinayānvito'bravīt //

One day Lord Ram, whose lotus-like holy feet are served by goddess Laxmi herself, was sitting alone. At that time Laxman, who is of a pure and uncorrupt mind and intellect, went to him, bowed before him most reverentially and prayed to him most politely (3)—

त्वं शुद्धबोधोऽसि हि सर्वदेहिनामात्मास्यधीशोऽसि निराकृतिः स्वयम्।
प्रतीयसे ज्ञानदृशां महामते पादाब्जभृङ्गाहितसङ्गसङ्गिनाम्।।4।।

tvaṃ śuddhabodho'si hi sarvadehinā-
mātmāsyadhīśo'si nirākṛtiḥ svayam /
pratīyase jñānadṛśāṃ mahāmate
pābādjabhṛṅgāhitasaṅgasaṅginām //

'Oh the great and wise one (Sri Ram)! You are an embodiment and an image of pure, pristine wisdom, true knowledge and enlightenment; you are the Atma or the microcosmic soul of all the creatures who have a physical gross body; you are the Lord of all; and you are formless and without any attributes.

You are visible through the eyes of wisdom and enlightenment to

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those who admire, adore and love the company of your ardent devotees and followers who resemble a honey bee in their affection for your lotus-like holy feet. (4).

[Note—That is, only those who love the company of your devotees who are very devoted and close to you by the virtue of their sincere and deep devotion for you, get the opportunity to become aware of your reality and truth. Such devotees are compared to a bee because a bee is focused on the nectar present in the flower and it remains oblivious of the surrounding world when it is engaged in drinking nectar. Here in this simile, the bliss that is derived from having devotion for you and by serving and remaining surrendered at your feet is like the nectar that the bees drink.

The company of your ardent devotees gives them an opportunity to remain in holy company where spiritual topics are discussed. The holy atmosphere is conducive to promoting auspiciousness, spiritualism and religiosity which in turn helps the aspirant seeking the Truth to experience it, perceive it and witness it, and he is thus inspired to pursue his goal in a righteous and auspicious manner, for in case he needs advice and guidance, he has your devotees as well as your own example to show him the path.]

अहं प्रपन्नोऽस्मि पदाम्बुजं प्रभो भवापवर्गं तव योगिभावितम्।
यथाञ्जसाज्ञानमपारवारिधिं सुखं तरिष्यामि तथानुशाधि माम्।।5।।

ahaṃ prapanno'smi padāmbujaṃ prabho
bhavāpavargaṃ tava yogibhāvitam /
yathāñjasājñānamapāravāridhiṃ
sukhaṃ tariṣyāmi tathānuśādhi mām //

Oh Lord! I take shelter and find refuge and succour in your lotus-like holy feet which are constantly meditated upon and remembered by Yogis (ascetics) and which are potent enough to liberate one from the shackles of this mundane, materialistic, delusory world. Please preach me (i.e. give me that pristine pure knowledge) so that I can easily, effortlessly get across this vast measureless ocean of ignorance' (5).

श्रुत्वाथ सौमित्रिवचोऽखिलं तदा प्राह प्रपन्नार्तिहरः प्रसन्नधीः।
विज्ञानमज्ञानतमःप्रशान्तये श्रुतिप्रपन्नं क्षितिपालभूषणः।।6।।

śrutvātha saumitrivaco'khilaṃ tadā
prāha prapannārtiharaḥ prasannadhīḥ /

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vijñānamajñānatamaḥpraśāntaye
śrutiprapannaṃ kṣitipālabhūṣaṇaḥ //

Hearing all these words of the son of Sumitra (Laxman) and finding him very eager and sincere to find out (or hear) about the way to overcome the darkness of ignorance that has been worrying him, and achieve enlightenment through pure, pristine, divine and spiritual knowledge, Sri Ram—who is munificent, benevolent and magnanimous towards those who have sought his shelter and refuge with him, and who is like a jewel among the wise kings—said with a delighted mind and cheerful heart (6)—

आदौ स्ववर्णाश्रमवर्णिताः क्रियाः कृत्वा समासादितशुद्धमानसः।
समाप्य तत्पूर्वमुपात्तसाधनः समाश्रयेत्सद्गुरुमात्मलब्धये।।7।।

ādau svavarṇāśramavarṇitāḥ kriyāḥ
kṛtvā samāsāditaśuddhamānasaḥ /
samāpya tatpūrvamupāttasādhanaḥ
samāśrayetsadgurumātmalabdhaye //

(Sri Ram said—) 'To start with, one should be steadfast in honestly, diligently and righteously doing the sanctioned duties assigned to him and following the set norms determined for him by the scriptures in accordance with the respective Varnas and Ashrams to which one belongs in this life.

When, in due course of time (and sustained efforts), the mind-intellect apparatus (i.e. the emotions and thoughts) is purified (i.e. purged, catheterised) of all negative and evil tendencies and temperaments, all perversions and corruptions, then one should gradually detach and dissociate oneself from those worldly deeds.

During this period, he should endeavour to acquire the virtues of 'Sham and Dam', i.e. tranquility, calmness, quietness, and self-restraint as well as equanimity, pardon, tolerance, endurance, forbearance and fortitude respectively. This will help him to inculcate a pure and uncorrupt mind-intellect complex. Having thus prepared the preliminary ground, he should then approach a wise, erudite and enlightened teacher or a moral preceptor called a Guru for the acquisition of truthful knowledge about the reality and nature of the Atma which is the pure self or consciousness (i.e. seek self-realisation) (7).

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[Note—(i) The society had been classified into four Varans, viz.—(a) Brahmins— they were the educated class whose main function was priesthood, teaching, moral guidance, study and interpretation of the scriptures etc.; (b) The Kshatriyas— they were the ruling class with the mandate to protect the society from predators relying on the strength of their arms; (c) The Vaishyas— they were supposed to do trading and other business related activities to take care of the financial and material well-being of the people; they were the mercantile section of the society; (d) the Shudras— that was a broad category encompassing all those who were of the service class. Their main brief was to serve the other 3 classes so that they are spared the tedious chores related to the day-to-day life and instead concentrate on their main designated functions as briefed above.

(ii) The four Ashrams were the periods in which the life of an individual was divided into, viz.— (a) Brahmachari— the celibate period devoted to study and inculcating self-restraint. It was the 1st quarter of life; (b) Grihastha— the married period of life dealing with household activities and responsibilities, especially with procreation. This was the 2nd quarter; (c) Vaanprastha— it was expected that a householder, after living up to his expectations, would eventually hand over the mantle to his kith and kin, especially his offspring, and prepare himself to leave the humdrum world of material objects and responsibilities and go to the forest in preparation for the final exit from this world. This is the 3rd phase of life; (d) Sanyas— means complete renunciation and disassociation from worldly ties. During these phase, actual dwelling in secluded forest was expected from an aspirant. The time was to be spent in doing Tapa (austerities and penances) and Yoga (meditating and contemplating), and in general repenting and atoning for the sins that were done during the earlier phases of life. This phase of life required serenity, placidity and total detachment from the world left behind by the seeker/aspirant for obtaining total bliss and tranquility of the soul. This marked the 4th phase prior to death.

The basic idea expressed in this verse is that a person should do his worldly duties in a righteous manner according to the guidelines set by the scriptures. This automatically implies that the deeds are to be done not only righteously but also without allowing oneself being attached to them and their results; not being indulgent in them and remaining instead dispassionate towards them from the very beginning. The deeds should be regarded as an offering to the sacrificial fire and one should think that the world is not the real thing that it appears to be.

This way of thinking and outlook would help a person prepare for inculcating noble virtues as Sham and Dam as described above. These prepare the ground for his spiritual progress.

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The importance of a wise Guru has been also emphasised in Lanka Kand, canto 6, verse no. 44.]

क्रिया शरीरोद्भवहेतुरादृता प्रियाप्रियौ तौ भवतः सुरागिणः।
धर्मेतरौ तत्र पुनः शरीरकं पुनः क्रिया चक्रवदीर्यते भवः।।8।।

kriyā śarīrodbhavaheturādṛtā
priyāpriyau tau bhavataḥ surāgiṇaḥ /
dharmetarau tatra punaḥ śarīrakaṃ
punaḥ kriyā cakravadīryate bhavaḥ //

[In this verse, it is described how and why a creature continues to fall in, or is repeatedly tied to the endless cycle of birth and death—]

Deeds and actions done by a person are an accepted means to determine the course that the individual follows at the end of his worldly life. This is applicable to that person who admires his body and falsely thinks that the gross body is his true personae (and not the causal body harbouring the pure self which is the pure consciousness called Atma and the person's true identity). Since the body does various deeds which may be good or bad, righteous or unrighteous, the person has to suffer their consequences because he had identified himself with the body that had done the deed. The person cannot claim indemnity from the results of the deeds. This results in his obtaining a body or form as a reward or punishment which is consonant with the good or bad deeds done during the life time of the person. The body thus acquired (depending upon the nature, quality, quantum and category of various deeds and actions) indulges in a new/fresh cycle of deeds and actions. This is how this world goes on and on like a wheel (8).

अज्ञानमेवास्य हि मूलकारणं तद्धानमेवात्र विधौ विधीयते।
विद्यैव तन्नाशविधौ पटीयसी न कर्म तज्जं सविरोधमीरितम्।।9।।

ajñānamevāsya hi mūlakāraṇaṃ
taddhānamevātra vidhau vidhīyate /
vidyaiva tannāśavidhau paṭīyasī /
na karma tajjaṃ savirodhamīritam //

The root cause of treating the world as having an existence and consequence is the presence of ignorance and lack of true knowledge[1] of what is the actual reality. This ignorance can be eliminated with the help of and by having firm faith, conviction and belief in the divine words of advice and truth as proclaimed by the scriptures. The

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elimination of the darkness of ignorance (called Agyan) by the light of knowledge and wisdom (called Gyan) is said to be the only means to obtain liberation and deliverance from the fetters that is symbolized by this world.

Only Gyan (truthful and correct wisdom, knowledge, erudition, enlightenment, awareness and realisation) is potentially able to destroy (overcome, eliminate) Agyan (ignorance and all things that are the opposite of Gyan), not Karma (the deeds or actions done by a creature)[2], simply because the latter (deeds/actions) have their origin in ignorance and they cannot oppose (or be inimical to or stand against) their creator Agyan that has generated them. (9).

[Note—[1]What is this ignorance and what is the knowledge the lack of which causes so many problems for the creature? The two fundamental errors of conceptions—viz. one, the body is the identity of the creature, or that one's body is one's true form and identity and that one is known and recognised by one's body, and second, the notion of one being the doer of deeds, though the deeds are being done by the body and not the Atma. The first misconception is the root cause of all other misconceptions—for the true self or identity of a creature is not its body but the Atma or soul. The body is perishable and gross and subject to all sorts of afflictions, whereas the Atma is pure, eternal, sublime, ethereal, divine and consciousness. If this fact is realised, then the train of falsehoods that follow in the wake of the first misconception also get automatically derailed, because, to begin with, the deeds are done by the gross external body and not the sublime and subtle Atma which resides in the causal body of a creature. When the Atma does not do any deed then the very premise on which it is subjected to sufferance is eliminated. Hence, there is no question of it either enjoying or suffering from good or bad deeds done by the body.

Once a fallacious conception is allowed to get a stranglehold on the creature, it is impossible to free oneself from its clutches unless Gyan or truthful awareness is used as a stick and enables one to chase the bull representing ignorance out of his house and prevent more damage to his household representing his inner self, which in this case is his mind and intellect complex regulating his emotions and thoughts as well as his intellectual discriminatory faculties. The creature is the Atma in this example.

[2]Verse no.8 has already emphasised that it is out of ignorance that a creature thinks that what the body does is being done by him. The factual position is something different, as the Atma is the creature's true identity and not the body. So the very notion of 'doing deeds' or that 'I am doing something' is due to ignorance of the truth. Therefore deeds cannot help

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one to get rid of ignorance. It is only possible by acquisition of the correct knowledge that would tell the creature what is the fact and help him to wisen up to the reality. Since Karma (deeds) has Agyan as its parent, it cannot go against it.

See also Aranya Kand, canto 4, verse no.25-30 and 38-45; Kishkindha Kand, canto 3, verse no.18-27; Sundar Kand, canto 4, verse no. 18-21; Lanka Kand, canto 10, verse no.37-40, and canto 12, verse no.15-18 in this context.]

नाज्ञानहानिर्न च रागसंक्षयो भवेत्ततः कर्म सदोषमुद्भवेत्।
ततः पुनः संसृतिरप्यवारिता तस्माद्बुधो ज्ञानविचारवान्भवेत्।।10।।

nājñānahānirna ca rāgasaṃkṣayo
bhavettataḥ karma sadoṣamudbhavet /
tataḥ punaḥ saṃsṛtirapyavāritā
tasmādbudho jñānavicāravānbhavet //

One cannot hope to destroy either ignorance or overcome attachments to this world, the sense of belonging to it, having infatuations, attractions and yearnings etc. for it by doing anything with a motive and having a desire or expectation of a reward, either good or bad. On the contrary, such kinds of actions only result in creation of newer desires and yearnings as well as the accompanying actions to fulfill those desires and yearnings. As a consequence, the vicious cycle continues endlessly. This naturally results in rebirth in this world (see verse no. 8). Therefore, those who are clever and wise, should spend their time in contemplation and self study in order to overcome ignorance and lack of truthful knowledge which is the mother of all fetters tying the soul to this mundane, entangling and artificial world (10).

[Note :—The creature takes repeated birth in this world because all the desires cannot be fulfilled in one life alone, and the unfulfilled desires pushes the soul into another body to enable it to accomplish those unfulfilled and incomplete tasks in a new life. Besides this, the deeds done during the present life leaves a certain train of consequences in their wake as every action has a commensurate reaction. Like the theory that energy cannot perish but only changes shape, these consequences force the creature to change his form and bear the consequences of his own deeds. Since the creature had all along been claiming that its body is its own and has been identifying itself with the body, it cannot deny that it has not done a particular deed and is not responsible for its results.

These two factors—unfulfilled desires and consequences of deeds done—

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have the combined effect on the destiny of the creature who has erroneously thought that it is the one with a particular body that has done a particular deed, and therefore it has got the right to enjoy its fruits.

On the contrary, if the creature has the benefit of Gyan, it would realise that the body is not its true identity but it is the Atma, and the latter is pure conscious, immaculate, unattached to anything, and is merely a witness and not a doer of deeds, the creature would not be accused of either doing the deeds and therefore is not forced to bear its consequences.

There is another chapter in which Lord Ram has preached Laxman on these fundamental metaphysical questions in Aranya Kand, canto 4, verse no.16-55. To be precise, verse no.36-45 describes what constitutes Gyan.]

ननु क्रिया वेदमुखेन चोदिता तथैव विद्या पुरुषार्थसाधनम्।
कर्तव्यता प्राणभृतः प्रचोदिता विद्यासहायत्वमुपैति सा पुनः।। 11।।

nanu kriyā vedamukhena coditā
tathaiva vidyā puruṣārthasādhanam /
kartavyatā prāṇabhṛtaḥ pracoditā
vidyāsahāyatvamupaiti sā punaḥ //

[Verse no. 11-13 describe how people with erroneous conceptions and fallacious thinking misinterpret the real meaning of what the scriptures say and present arguments quoting these very scriptures to bolster their ill-conceived ideas to create a lot of confusion. It must be remembered that the same thing can be interpreted in more than one way, but the trick is to interpret it correctly.]

Some skeptics and doubting Thomas's argument is that doing deeds (i.e. not sitting idle, or running away from the world and duties allotted to a creature by virtue of his taking birth and being alive) is as much sanctioned (ratified, supported and prescribed) by the Vedas as is the acquisition of Gyan (true knowledge, erudition, sagacity, enlightenment and self realisation). That is, according to them, both 'deed' and 'knowledge' is one thing and they both are spiritually enlightening.

They argue that spiritual efforts diligently made by a person provide him with the reward of him being able to access or acquire knowledge of what is the reality and truth, which in its wake gives him liberation and deliverance from the bondages of this artificial, entrapping and troubling world. Similarly, deeds also require efforts on the part of the person to be successful and bear fruits for him. Both require sincere effort, industry, diligence, energy and labour.

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Besides this, the Vedas emphasise and prescribe that all the creatures are expected to act or do deeds according to their destiny (i.e. their Varans and Ashrams; see verse no.7) (for not doing anything and sitting idle is in it self considered a negative trait and chided by the scriptures—see verse no.12 below).

Hence, deeds and actions involving efforts and diligence become a co-partner in one's endeavour of acquiring truthful knowledge, erudition and enlightenment (11).

कर्माकृतौ दोषमपि श्रुतिर्जगौ तस्मात्सदा कार्यमिदं मुमुक्षुणा।
ननु स्वतन्त्रा ध्रुवकार्यकारिणी विद्या न किञ्चिन्मनसाप्यपेक्षते।।12।।
न सत्यकार्योऽपि हि यद्वदध्वरः प्रकाङ्क्षतेऽन्यानपि कारकादिकान्।
तथैव विद्या विधितः प्रकाशितैर्विशिष्यते कर्मभिरेव मुक्तये।।13।।

karmākṛtau doṣamapi śrutirjagau
tasmātsadā kāryamidaṃ mumukṣuṇā /
nanu svatantrā dhruvakāryakāriṇī
vidyā na kiñcinmanasāpyapekṣate //
na satyakāryo'pi hi yadvadadhvaraḥ
prakāṅkṣate'nyānapi kārakādikān /
tathaiva vidyā vidhitaḥ prakāśitai-
rviśiṣyate karmabhireva muktaye //

The Vedas find fault in remaining idle, indolent and lethargic as well as in frittering away time and life carelessly and uselessly. So the seekers of emancipation and salvation (Moksha) should continue to do them (i.e. they must not waste their time in indolence and inertia, and continue to do whatever deeds they are supposed to do according to their destiny).

If anyone says or claims that Gyan (enlightenment, self realisation, true knowledge and wisdom) is self sustained and independent of all and can produce its beneficial effects with certainty, and that it does not need any help from any quarter, then it is wrong to say so (12). For example, doing religious sacrifices (e.g. fire sacrifice) entails doing a number of accompanying chores attendant and necessary to successfully complete it[1].

Similarly, Gyan can be an instrument (medium) of emancipation and salvation when it is accompanied by righteous, auspicious, noble and sanctioned actions and deeds which are compatible with the aim

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of salvation and liberation from the web of this mundane, entangling world, and conducive to this aim. (13).

Note—[1]That is, though the sacrifice itself is a most righteous, holy and Veda-sanctioned conception and a righteous mean for a creature's spiritual enhancement and its liberation and deliverance from this entrapping world, but it cannot be done without proper preparation and accompanying hassles such as giving charities and alms, honouring Gods and Brahmins, keeping strict vows such as fasting, celibacy, restraint of the sense organs, leading austere life etc. It also involves elaborate rituals requiring a lot of effort and diligence on the part of the aspirant. In short, a lot of effort is involved in this mean of spiritual progress.

[2]That is, if a person claims to be really enlightened and wise, then there is no need for him to shun doing deeds and taking necessary actions as deemed prudent by circumstances. This is because it is deemed that such a wise person would not allow himself to be emotionally and mentally involved in those deeds that the body does as needed by destiny for it to do. Non-involvement in deeds is the key here; and the natural corollary is non-expectation of any reward. This creates detachment and indifference towards both the deeds as well as the reward, and subsequently the creature remains unruffled and peaceful and unconcerned about what happens by doing anything and what does not. This peace, tranquility and blissfulness is a characteristic feature of a person who has obtained Gyan, and it also marks liberation from the troubles and tribulations that are hallmarks of this mundane and deluding world that sucks an ignorant person in its vortex of miseries and pain.

'Moksha' is not dependent so much on deeds as it is on remaining detached from these deeds and their results, which is a difficult proposition. This is not possible unless one realises that one's true self is the Atma and not the body. This is where people with faulty conception stumble. They forget that the very notion that 'I am doing deeds' is directly related to the creature having awareness of one's body, because deeds are done by the body. If one is unaware of the body, then there is no question of even being aware of whether the deed is done or not. Incidentally, this unawareness of the existence of the body while doing deeds is what is known as 'Samadhi' wherein the aspirant goes about his normal routing work without being aware of what is happening. The following verse no.14 further elaborates on this fact.]

केचिद्वदन्तीति वितर्कवादिनस्तदप्यसद्दृष्टविरोधकारणात्।
देहाभिमानादभिवर्धते क्रिया विद्या गताहङ्कृतितः प्रसिद्ध्यति।।14।।

kecidvadantīti vitarkavādina-
stadapyasaddṛṣṭavirodhakāraṇāt /

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dehābhimānādabhivardhate kriyā
vidyā gatāhaṅkṛtitaḥ prasiddhyati //

Those skeptics, doubting Thomases and heretics who, under delusions and erroneous conceptions, set up false reasoning to illogically say or claim it to be so (as in verse nos. 11-13), are inherently at fault because their claim is evidently self contradictory.

This is because deeds and actions are done due to the false notion of ego, pride and arrogance that a creature has about his body. These deeds and actions are associated with the erroneous belief that the body that does the deed is one's 'self'. A creature does anything because he is proud or confident that his body will be able to accomplish a particular task. Once the task is finished, it feels satisfied and proud that 'it is me who has done such and such thing and therefore am entitled to enjoy its reward'.

On the contrary, Gyan entails crushing of the negative element of Ahankar (pride, ego, vanity and their attendant arrogance and haughtiness) which arise out of Agyan (ignorance), which means that the creature does not know the true nature of the pure self, which is the pure conscious Atma and not the gross body, and remains under the false impression that 'he is a doer of deeds' which the body is actually doing under the mandate of destiny (14).

[Note—Verse no.7 above endorses this view that in the beginning one should do one's sanctioned duties according to sanctioned methods, and use this opportunity of service to inculcate wisdom and erudition by observing the truth about the world as expounded by the scriptures. He carefully and closely sees the falseness of this world and the futility of pursuing its mirage-like pleasures and comforts which are nevertheless perishable and artificial. This first-hand witnessing inculcates renunciation and detachment in him, and even without any prodding he would tend to veer away from all those things that are impermanent and artificial, are meant only to trap instead of liberate. This does not meaning running away from duties and doing deeds, but doing them with dispassion and neutrality, with equanimity and fortitude.]

विशुद्धविज्ञानविरोचनाञ्चिता विद्यात्मवृत्तिश्चरमेति भण्यते।
उदेति कर्माखिलकारकादिभिर्निहन्ति विद्याखिलकारकादिकम्।।15।।

viśuddhavijñānavirocanāñcitā
vidyātmavṛttiścarameti bhaṇyate /
udeti karmākhilakārakādibhi-
rnihanti vidyākhilakārakādikam //

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The fundamental and truthful nature of the 'true and pure self' as supreme, truthful, eternal and pure consciousness is brought to the fore under the light of erudition, enlightenment and wisdom that comes by constant and persistent study of the scriptures, such as the Vedas and Upanishads, contemplation upon their great tenets, pondering deeply on their import and practicing of their edicts and paths shown by them. The pure conscious self begins to glow and emanate a radiance that is experienced and witnessed by the seeker. That eclectic, wholesome and divine knowledge that ensures that this realisation is brought about is known as Vidya. [It is also known as Atma-Vidya because it pertains to realisation of Atma.]

In addition to this, all the deeds are done by a so-called 'doer', whereas true knowledge of the truth and self realisation entails destruction of the notion of being a 'doer' of anything (15).

[Note :—When the creature realises its true nature and identity as being the Atma which is pure consciousness and is truthful, eternal, dispassionate and neutral, and which is distinct from the gross physical body which actually does the physical exercise of the deed, it ceases to do anything in the sense that it—as the Atma—is not involved in the deeds done by the body which is non-Atma. Therefore, the creature is dispassionate in doing whatever is to be done as ordained by destiny or its past deeds, and is not bothered about its outcome or rewards, whether good or bad. Such a creature is self-realised and enlightened in as far as his deeds are concerned. This state is compared to the situation in which, under delusions, the creature identifies itself with the body and thinks itself to be the 'doer' of the various deeds and its incumbent emotions and consequences. The word 'doer' links the soul to the external body and other factors that are not at all linked to its pure form. When the soul/Atma de-links itself from these extraneous factors, it does not call itself the 'doer', but merely becomes a 'witness' to whatever is happening. The difference between the words 'doer' and 'witness' is very obvious and does not require much explanation. While the former actively involves in actions, the latter just watches passively, dispassionately. See also note to verse nos. 28-34 below.]

तस्मात्त्यजेत्कार्यमशेषतः सुधीर्विद्याविरोधान्न समुच्चयो भवेत्।
आत्मानुसन्धानपरायणः सदा निवृत्तसर्वेन्द्रियवृत्तिगोचरः॥ 16॥

tasmāttyajetkāryamaśeṣataḥ sudhī-
rvidyāvirodhānna samuccayo bhavet /
ātmānusandhānaparāyaṇaḥ sadā
nivṛttasarvendriyavṛttigocaraḥ //

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That is why a wise and clever seeker should distance himself or become dispassionate or detached towards all the objects of the senses pertaining to this material world which gratify the various sense organs of the body, and instead divert one's energy and efforts industriously towards self-realisation and enlightenment, towards researching about the truth of the self.

Towards this end, he should abandon involvement in deeds because these deeds create distraction and disturbance in his concentration and steadfastness of purpose; they act as a hindrance and create obstacles in the path.

Karma (deed and action) are opposed to Vidya (truthful enlightenment about the Atma) and therefore they are not compatible with each other. They are not complimentary to each other (16).

यावच्छरीरादिषु मायया त्मधीस्तावद्विधेयो विधिवादकर्मणाम्।
नेतीति वाक्यैरखिलं निषिध्य तज्ज्ञात्वा परात्मानमथ त्यजेत्क्रियाः ।।17।।

yāvaccharīrādiṣu māyayātmadhī-
stāvadvidheyo vidhivādakarmaṇām /
netīti vākyairakhilaṃ niṣidhya
tajjñātvā parātmānamatha tyajetkriyāḥ //

As long as a person is attached to his body and objects pertaining to (relevant, concerning) it (i.e. till the time he identifies himself with the gross, physical body and its surrounding materialistic world) due to the evil, misleading, diversionary effects and influences of Maya (delusions and deceptions), it is prescribed for him that he performs the various religious rituals and observes sacraments as detailed by the scriptures. [These rituals are various sacrifices, duties, observances and sacraments which only help him to rinse himself from the dirt constantly clinging to him due to his own stupidity and erroneous beliefs and illusions. They are like crutches. They are not cures but only stop-gap arrangements or aids in his spiritual pursuits.] A wise person is one who deeply ponders and contemplates upon the great conclusions of the Vedas, such as 'Neti-Neti' (i.e. the truth is neither this nor that), and become certain that none of these material objects of the external world are for real and truthful; they are perishable and artificial. The only entity that is real and truthful is the eternal and conscious Atma. Besides the Atma the rest is 'non-Atma', i.e. they are not eternal and not conscious. One should realise one's own true

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supreme and sublime essential form as he Atma which is an image of the transcendental Parmatma who is the cosmic Soul or Atma of the entire creation.

This realisation would help him to naturally abandon Karma or getting involved in doing deeds (again because he realises that the deeds are being done by the body and not the Atma and that his own self is the Atma and not the body. Therefore, there is no question of him doing any thing because the Atma is not doing anything, but remains only a witness and spectator to all that is happening) (17).

[Note :—Please also see verse no. 34 below.]

यदा परात्मात्मविभेदभेदकं विज्ञानमात्मन्यवभाति भास्वरम्।
तदैव माया प्रविलीयतेऽञ्जसा सकारका कारणमात्मसंसृतेः।। 18।।

yadā parātmātmavibhedabhedakaṃ
vijñānamātmanyavabhāti bhāsvaram /
tadaiva māyā pravilīyate'ñjasā
sakārakā kāraṇamātmasaṃsṛte //

At the fortunate instant when the brilliant light of enlightenment and self realisation—that there is no duality or distinction between the transcendental, supreme, macrocosmic Soul of the entire creation, called Parmatma, and the creature's own microcosmic soul called the conscious self or Atma—shines inside the heart of the creature, Maya (ignorance induced delusions) and its accompanying chain of falsehoods that makes the creature get involved in various deeds, together with their incumbent consequences, become extinct. This extinction and blowing away or dissolution of Maya removes the very cause of the creature being shackled to, or getting pilloried to the entrapping world, resulting in the creature taking a rebirth (18).

[Note :—How the different external factors influence the personality of a creature and effect his true form, the Atma, is depicted in a full page diagram appended to Appendix no.2 of this book. Please also refer to verse no. 40 of this Canto below. Other relevant texts are the following—Ayodhya Kand, canto 1, verse no.20-31; Aranya Kanda, canto 3, verse no.20-24, 30-33; Aranya Kanda, canto 4, verse no.20-45; and verse nos. 79-80 of Canto 7 of Uttar Kand.]

श्रुतिप्रमाणाभिविनाशिता च सा कथं भविष्यत्यपि कार्यकारिणी।
विज्ञानमात्रादमलाद्वितीयतस्तस्मादविद्या न पुनर्भविष्यति।। 19।।

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śrutipramāṇābhivināśitā ca sā
kathaṃ bhaviṣyatyapi kāryakāriṇī /
vijñānamātrādamalādvitīya-
tastasmādavidyā na punarbhaviṣyati //

If it (Maya) is destroyed, eliminated or removed using the method shown by the Vedas (as described in brief in the preceding verses and all earlier gospels that deal with Maya), how can it dare to carry out its nefarious activities again? This is because of the fact that the essential or elementary transcendental Truth is one and irrefutably only one, it is an embodiment of Gyan (wisdom, truthful knowledge and enlightenment), it is pure, pristine, uncorrupt and unique, having no parallel of its kind. Hence, when one becomes aware of this essential 'truth' (as in verse nos. 7-18), then there is no scope left for ignorance or Agyan to rise (or raise its head) again (19).

यदि स्म नष्टा न पुनः प्रसूयते कर्ताहमस्येति मतिः कथं भवेत्।
तस्मात्स्वतन्त्रा न किमप्यपेक्षते विद्या विमोक्षाय विभाति केवला।।20।।

yadi sma naṣṭā na punaḥ prasūyate
kartāhamasyeti matiḥ kathaṃ bhavet /
tasmātsvatantrā na kimapyapekṣate
vidyā vimokṣāya vibhāti kevalā //

When ignorance (i.e. Avidya) and its accompanying illusions, delusions and misconceptions (i.e. Maya) can't be produced again after being made extinct once (as described in verse nos. 15-19), then how can an enlightened, sagacious, erudite, self realised and wise person ever feel or say that 'I am the doer of such and such deed'? That is the reason why Gyan is independent and self-sustained, and it has the potential to independently, out of its own accord, provide liberation, deliverance, emancipation and salvation to the creature without depending on any other means such as deeds done, actions taken or other physical activities of the body, for instance religious activities and other such things (20).

[Note :—This verse should be read in conjunction with verse no. 17 to bring out the full meaning. Once erudition enlightens a creature about the falsehood of the objects of this materialistic world, it never gets enticed by them; it can never be tricked into believing that the world is true. This wisdom is permanent because it has been born out of wisdom and deep analysis of the principles pronounced by the scriptures. It is not hearsay

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but actually experienced by the seeker patiently and over a period of time when he was actively doing his duties in this world as prescribed in verse no.7 above. This leads to detachment and disillusionment from the world. It is obvious that once being detached from the deeds, the creature breaks the vicious cycle consisting of 'deeds, their results, unfulfilled desires, new birth which is a consequence of these, newer deeds and desires', and so and so forth as described in verse nos. 8-10. Please also refer to verse no. 34 and 45-47 in this context.]

सा तैत्तिरीयश्रुतिराह सादरं न्यासं प्रशस्ताखिलकर्मणां स्फुटम्।
एतावदित्याह च वाजिनां श्रुतिर्ज्ञानं विमोक्षाय न कर्म साधनम्।। 21।।

sā taittirīyaśrutirāha sādaraṃ
nyāsaṃ praśastākhilakarmaṇāṃ sphuṭam /
etāvadityāha ca vājināṃ śruti-
rjñānaṃ vimokṣāya na karma sādhanam //

This observation finds its unequivocal support and ratification in the following two branches of the Vedas—(a) The Taiteriya branch[1] expressly asserts politely as a dictum that it is best to forsake all deeds and external engagements. (b) Similarly, 'Etawat'[2] etc. doctrines contained in the Vajsaney branch of the Vedas also proclaim that Gyan is the way to attain emancipation and salvation, and not deeds, various worldly activities and numerous engagements in any other rituals (21).

[Note :—(a)[1] न कर्मणा न प्रजया धनेन त्यागेनैक अमृतत्वमानुशः—Taiteria Aranayak 10/10 is the verdict of Taiteriya Brahmin. (b)[2] एतावदरे खल्वमृतत्वम—Brihadaranyaka Upanishad 4/5/15 is the verdict of Etawat referred above. They mean in brief as follows—(a) The essence of the nectar cannot be found by a man without forsaking deeds, worldly activities and acquisition of wealth. (b) That it is the only means of finding the essence of the nectar.]

विद्यासमत्वेन तु दर्शितस्त्वया क्रतुर्न दृष्टान्त उदाहृतः समः।
फलैः पृथक्त्वाद्बहुकारकैः क्रतुः संसाध्यते ज्ञानमतो विपर्ययम्।। 22।।

vidyāsamatvena tu darśitastvayā
kraturna dṛṣṭānta udāhṛtaḥ samaḥ /
phalaiḥ pṛthaktvādbahukārakaiḥ kratuḥ
saṃsādhyate jñānamato viparyayam //

You (i.e. Laxman) have cited various religious rituals and sacrifices as being either complimentary or equivalent to Gyan (see verse nos. 11-13), but this conclusion or citation is a fallacy. It is because both

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have different results (or fruits/rewards). Besides this, a religious sacrifice entails the services of various 'doers' (helpers and subordinates besides the chief patron and priests), while Gyan, as opposed to it, involves none (because it entails contemplation and meditation which rule out external interferences which act as impediments and obstacles in spiritual pursuit) (22).

[Note :—In brief it means that acquisition of Gyan is of paramount importance and superior to religious rituals and sacrifices. It is the best path to attain emancipation and salvation of the soul as opposed to other means. Further, since Gyan requires immense concentration and self study, it requires serenity, tranquility and placidity of mind and environment. It involves a journey inwards rather than outwards in this noisy world which vexes the spirit of the aspirant instead of helping him in his spiritual pursuits. Compared to Gyan, other religious pursuits entail a lot of worldly activities.]

सप्रत्यवायो ह्यहमित्यनात्मधीरज्ञप्रसिद्धा न तु तत्त्वदर्शिनः।
तस्माद्बुधैस्त्याज्यमविक्रियात्मभिर्विधानतः कर्म विधिप्रकाशितम्।। 23 ।।

apratyavāyo hyahamityanātmadhī-
rajñaprasiddhā na tu tattvadarśinaḥ /
tasmādbudhaistyājyamavikriyātmabhi-
rvidhānataḥ karma vidhiprakāśitam //

'I shall be guilty of misconduct and violation of established traditions and shall have to repent for it (by being indifferent towards deeds, by abandoning doing of deeds, as that would make me seem to be apparently lethargic, apathetic, un-industrious, indolent and inactive besides being ignorant of what the scriptures prescribe)'—such a stupid and erroneous thought can occur to ignorant and foolish people but not to the wise and enlightened ones who are aware of the truth and essential reality.

That is why the wise and sagacious person who has a pure, uncorrupt and blemish-free mind and intellect apparatus should endeavour to abandon doing even expected deeds (i.e. those deeds that have their sanction by the scriptures and are to be done if one takes a birth; the ordained deeds or the deeds determined by the destiny of the creatures). But this abandonment must not be reckless and impulsive, and as an excuse for being indolent and lazy, being careless and callous, but must be done systematically and diligently,

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in a well thought out way and in accordance with established procedure for doing it (23).

श्रद्धान्वितस्तत्त्वमसीति वाक्यतो गुरोः प्रसादादपि शुद्धमानसः।
विज्ञाय चैकात्म्यमथात्मजीवयोः सुखी भवेन्मेरुरिवाप्रकम्पनः।।24।।

śraddhānvitastattvamasīti vākyato
guroḥ prasādādapi śuddhamānasaḥ /
vijñāya caikātmyamathātmajīvayoḥ
sukhī bhavenmerurivāprakampanaḥ //

Having cleansed his mind-intellect complex of all the corrupting influences, the seeker/aspirant should seek the advice and blessing of a wise teacher, and as a reward or fruit of such seeking and blessing of the teacher, he should realise the absolute truth of the great saying (proclamation of the Vedas) 'TATWAMASI' with the greatest of reverence, honour, faith, conviction and devotion. The great tenet of the Vedas emphasises the oneness (non-duality) between the Parmatma (i.e. the supreme, macrocosmic, all-pervading, omniscient transcendental Soul) and the microcosmic counterpart of it in the creature called the Atma which is pure consciousness. By this self realisation, he would become sublime, tranquil, blissful, happy, contented, stable, un-wavering and unfaltering like the Sumeru mountain (24).

आदौ पदार्थावगतिर्हि कारणं वाक्यार्थविज्ञानविधौ विधानतः।
तत्त्वम्पदार्थौ परमात्मजीवकावसीति चैकात्म्यमथानयोर्भवेत्।।25।।

ādau padārthāvagatirhi kāraṇaṃ
vākyārthavijñānavidhau vidhānataḥ /
tattvampadārthau paramātmajīvakā-
vasīti caikātmyamathānayorbhavet //

It is a rule that to understand the meaning of a sentence or phrase, one must understand the meaning of each individual word or syllables in it. Therefore, this great maxim (truth) of the Vedas TATWAMASI (see verse no. 24) which is an established axiom (i.e. self evident truth) consists of two syllables, viz. 'TAT' and 'TWAM' which refer to the 'Parmatma or the 'supreme macrocosmic transcendental Soul' and the 'Atma or the microcosmic soul of the creatures' respectively, while the third syllable 'ASI' links the two as being equivalent to each other or synonymous with each other; it establishes uniformity between them (25).

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[Note :—In simple language, verse nos. 24-25 mean that the Parmatma and the Atma are one and the same. See footnote to verse no. 27.]

प्रत्यक्परोक्षादिविरोधमात्मनोर्विहाय सङ्गृह्य तयोश्चिदात्मताम्।
संशोधितां लक्षणया च लक्षितां ज्ञात्वा स्वमात्मानमथाद्वयो भवेत्।। 26।।

pratyakparokṣādivirodhamātmano-
rvihāya saṅgṛhya tayościdātmatām /
saṃśodhitāṃ lakṣaṇayā ca lakṣitāṃ
jñātvā svamātmānamathādvayo bhavet //

Out of these two (Parmatma and the Atma), the Atma of the creature is evident and witnessed by all (as the living creature visible to all), whereas Parmatma is beyond the comprehension of a creature and is imperceptible by even the mind and intellect (because he is invisible and inspite of being all pervading, he cannot be easily grasped and observed by any of the organs of a creature, such as the organs of perception and organs of comprehension).

One should leave aside the doubt and confusion arising out of apparent contradictions between the Atma and the Parmatma (that on the one hand both the Atma and Parmatma are one, and on the other hand they appear to be so different that there seems no comparison between them).

One should not be perplexed or confounded by the apparent contradiction between the literal meaning of the word 'TATWAMASI', but understand and accept the spirit or essence behind it which is self evident and clearly perceived in the form of the intrinsic characteristics, salient features and irrefutable signs that are indications of their uniformity. These signs/indications/characteristics clearly, undoubtedly and unambiguously establish that 'pure consciousness' is the uniform factor in both of them, the Parmatma as well as the Atma. This conclusion should be firmly established within the creature's mind and intellect that both the entities are synonymous with each other and they are the same (26).

एकात्मकत्वाज्जहती न सम्भवेत्तथा जहल्लक्षणता विरोधतः।
सोऽयम्पदार्थाविव भागलक्षणा युज्येत तत्त्वम्पदयोरदोषतः।।27।।

ekātmakatvājjahatī na sambhave-
ttathājahallakṣaṇatā virodhataḥ /
so'yampadārthāviva bhāgalakṣaṇā
yujyeta tattvampadayoradoṣataḥ //

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Since the two syllables 'TAT' and 'TWAM' (refer verse no. 25) stand for the same essential truth which is one and the same (i.e. they are synonymous with one another), there cannot be a separate third meaning, connotation or interpretation of the word TATWAMASI.

At the same time, since these two syllables stand for two apparently different, distinct entities (as in verse no. 26), the word cannot describe the same entity; it cannot establish that they are one and the same immutable entity; it cannot indicate their unity, sameness or non-duality.

That is why, like the meaning of the axiom 'SOYAM' which literally means 'This is He' or 'This is It', the two earlier syllables (Tat and Twam—तत् + त्वम्) can have similarity or singularity in meaning by finding a characteristic common to both—such as the factor of 'pure consciousness' which is applicable to both the Parmatma (represented by the letters Tat) and the creature's Atma/soul (represented by the letters Twam). This definition has no errors or faults in it (27).

[Note :—(A) There are three types of meanings or interpretations of a word—(i) Jahati Laxana in which the literal meaning of the word is not taken into account and a different connotation is attached to it; (ii) Ajahal Laxana in which the word meaning is considered, but additional meanings and interpretations are added to it to give the word a wider ramification; (iii) Bhag Laxana in which a part is dropped and a part of the literal meaning is retained to arrive at a third interpretation of the word.

(B) There are the so-called four Mahavakyas or the great sayings, declarations, commandments or axioms and maxims of the Vedas as follows—(i) 'Brahm Is Consciousness' (Pragnanam Brahm) appears in Aitreya Upanishad of the Rig Veda. It means that Atma/consciousness, which gives life to the material layers consisting of the 5 sheaths of the creature is the same as the Supreme Reality/Truth behind the entire universe/creation called by the name of Brahm; (ii) 'That Thou Art' (Tat Twam Asi) is found in the Chandogya Upanishad of the Sam Veda. It means that the infinite, all-pervading, omniscient Supreme Truth/Reality is the consciousness or pure self in you. It is also called a statement of advice to the seekers in as much as it contains advice addressed to the seeker that the supreme reality is the self within him; (iii) 'This Self Is Brahm' (Ayam Atma Brahm) is found in the Mandukya Upanishad in the Atharva Veda. It means that the Atma which is self illuminated and the Supreme Reality/Truth are one and the same (i.e. identical); (iv) I Am Brahm (Aham Brahm Asmi) is found in the Brihadaranyak Upanishad of the Yajur Veda. It proclaims that the conscious principle/element in an individual is nothing other than the total consciousness. This is the

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statement made by the seeker after attaining self realisation. See also Baal Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 50-52 and Canto 7, verse nos. 40-41.

There are a number of other Upanishads that describe these great sayings of the Vedas, called the Mahavakyas. Some of them are the following :—

(a) According to Painglo-panishad, 3/2 of the Shukla Yajur Veda, they are—(1) that art thou; (2) thou art that; (3) you are Brahm, or you and Brahm are one; and (4) I am Brahm, or I and Brahm are one.

(b) According to Mandal Brahmino-panishad, 2/2/5 of the same Veda, it is 'that is me'.

(c) According to Mandal Brahmino-panishad, 3/1/6, it is 'you and me are one'.

(d) According to Shukar Rahasayo-panishad, 21/1-4 of Krishna Yajur Veda, they are the following—(1) OM salutations! Enlightenment and knowledge is Brahm and vice versa; (2) OM salutations! I am that Brahm; (3) OM salutations! Verily, that is you; (4) OM salutations! This Atma is Brahm. Other Upanishads that highlight the fundamental tenets of the Vedas are Atmabodho-panishad and Atmo-panishad amongst others.]

रसादिपञ्चीकृतभूतसम्भवं भोगालयं दुःखसुखादिकर्मणाम्।
शरीरमाद्यन्तवदादिकर्मजं मायामयं स्थूलमुपाधिमात्मनः ।। 28 ।।

rasādipañcīkṛtabhūtasambhavaṃ
bhogālayaṃ duḥkhasukhādikarmaṇām /
śarīramādyantavadādikarmajaṃ
māyāmayaṃ sthūlamupādhimātmanaḥ //

The wise and enlightened persons regard this gross body—which is created out of the five fundamental elements called Bhuts, which is the medium through which one enjoys or suffers the results of various deeds, good or bad, which is acquired/obtained as a result of the effects of past deeds and actions done by a creature, which has a beginning and an end (i.e. is born and dies), and which is unreal, illusive, deceptive and gross (i.e. is a creation of Maya, and therefore is bound to reflect its characters such as being illusive, false and deceptive)—as the gross manifestation (representative, attribute, title, name, designation, denomination or symbol) of the Atma or soul which is pure consciousness or pure self. [This gross body is the Atma's first body in which it dwells.] (28).

[Note :—The five elements referred above are earth, fire, water, wind and space.]

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सूक्ष्मं मनोबुद्धिदशेन्द्रियैर्युतं प्राणैरपञ्चीकृतभूतसम्भवम्।
भोक्तुः सुखादेरनुसाधनं भवेच्छरीरमन्यद्विदुरात्मनो बुधाः।। 29।।

sūkṣmaṃ manobuddhidaśendriyairyutaṃ
prāṇairapañcīkṛtabhūtasambhavam /
bhoktuḥ sukhāderanusādhanaṃ bhave-
ccharīramanyadvidurātmano budhāḥ //

The wise and enlightened persons regard the subtle body—consisting of the mind-intellect complex, the ten sense organs (i.e. their vital functions and perceptions), and the five Prans (vital wind forces or vital airs), a body which is created out of these seventeen elements[1] which are not classified as the base or gross elements called Bhuts, and which is the medium by which the creature experiences sorrows, pains, joys and happiness—as the second body of the creature's Atma or soul which is pure consciousness or pure self (29).

[Note :—[1]The seventeen elements as described above are the mind + the intellect + the 10 sense organs representing 5 subtle perceptions and 5 functions that the body performs + the 5 vital wind forces of life = 17.

The five subtle organs of perceptions and five functions that the body performs are as follows—(i) the five organs of perceptions are skin, ear, nose, eye and tongue, and their respective functions are touch, hear, smell, sight, and taste; the five organs of action are hands, legs, mouth, genitals, excretory organs and their functions are to catch, move, eat and speak, to reproduce and excrete. These ten sense organs referred above actually are part of the gross, physical body. Their inclusion in the subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect is due to the fact that the mind-intellect complex directly controls them as do the 5 Prans which infuse these otherwise inert entities with life. See also Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 20-21 and Lanka Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 43-44 in this context.

(ii) The five vital wind forces are the following— (a) Pran, the wind element, as breath, that is exhaled as well as inhaled, and which is responsible for infusing and sustaining life in the body; it is considered the chief wind in the whole setup because without life no other wind would be of any significance to the creature; (b) Apaan, the wind that passes down the intestines and is responsible for digestion of the food taken by the creature and its excretion through the anus and urinary organs (kidneys); (c) Saman, the wind that is responsible for equal distribution of nourishment throughout the body, as well as in circulation of blood; (d) Udaan, the wind that helps the body to rise and move about, it also helps the body to expel toxic waste gases in the body through the nostrils and mouth in the form of exhalation and cough; and (e) Vyan,

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the wind that helps in maintaining equilibrium and pressure within the body, and it controls the functioning of the other winds.]

अनाद्यनिर्वाच्यमपीह कारणं मायाप्रधानं तु परं शरीरकम्।
उपाधिभेदात्तु यतः पृथक स्थितं स्वात्मानमात्मन्यवधारयेत्क्रमात्।। 30।।

anādyanirvācyamapīha kāraṇaṃ
māyāpradhānaṃ tu paraṃ śarīrakam /
upādhibhedāttu yataḥ pṛthak sthitaṃ
svātmānamātmanyavadhārayetkramāt //

(Besides the above two forms of the body, viz. the gross, physical body and the subtle, non-physical body—) There is a third body called the causal body surrounded by the bliss sheath which is the cause of eternal bliss, peace and tranquility. It is without a beginning, it is beyond words to be able to describe it, and it is Maya-intensive in nature (i.e. it is here in this body that Maya or delusions of all kind originate). It surrounds or envelops the soul or the Atma which is pure consciousness, transcendental and supreme entity. It impinges on and is an influence on the latter's interaction with the other two forms of bodies.

In this way a person should distinguish between his pure self called the Atma which is pure consciousness from the other bodies from which it is completely separate and distinct; it does not have any titles, honours, representatives, attributes, names, designations, denominations, features or symbols of any kind like the other bodies. A wise and self-realised enlightened person should visualise this entity as being a resident in his heart (30).

कोशेष्वयं तेषु तु तत्तदाकृतिर्विभाति सङ्गात्स्फटिकोपलो यथा।
असङ्गरूपोऽयमजो यतोऽद्वयो विज्ञायतेऽस्मिन्परितो विचारिते।। 31।।

kośeṣvayaṃ teṣu tu tattadākṛti-
rvibhāti saṅgātsphaṭikopalo yathā /
asaṅgarūpo'yamajo yato'dvayo
vijñāyate'sminparito vicārite //

Like the 'Sphatik Mani' (i.e. crystal), which is in itself pure and colourless, this Atma (pure self or consciousness) also appears to take up the hues and forms (i.e. characteristics, attributes, virtues, qualities) of the different sheaths with which it is covered or veiled. But if one were to contemplate and ponder deeply into the matter, one shall find

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(i.e. come to the conclusion) that the Atma is unique, matchless and one of its own kind. Therefore, it is without any company or attachments as well as without a birth or beginning unlike the other sheaths with which it is surrounded and interacts. (31).

[Note :—The Atma lives in a body consisting of various sheaths called 'Koshas'. These sheaths or veils are five in number, and are called the Food or 'Anna Maye Kosh', Vital or 'Pran Maye Kosh', Mental or 'Mano Maye Kosh', Intellect or 'Gyan Maye Kosh', and Bliss or 'Anand Maye Kosh' respectively. Like the crystal, the attributeless and colourless Atma acquires the various attributes and qualities of these sheaths that surround it, because of the fact that the Atma lives in a body consisting of these sheaths, and it cannot remain indifferent to being effected by their individual characteristics and virtues, whether good or bad. Consequentially, the pristine pure Atma appears to have all these taints and scars that these sheaths possess.

The Atma is the pure-self, the pure consciousness which is a microscopic reflection of the vast macrocosmic Soul of the cosmos called Brahm. The Atma provides life or consciousness to the inert layers of matter consisting of the 5 elements of air, water, space, fire and earth which crystalise to form the five coverings or sheaths around the pure Atma, and together (the Atma and the five sheaths) they create what we call the 'living being', whether plant, animal or humans.

The Panch Kosha :—Or the five sheaths covering or enveloping the Atma are as follows—(i) The food sheath; (ii) the vital air sheath; (iii) the mental sheath; (iv) the intellectual sheath; (v) and the bliss sheath.

The Food Sheath :—Is the physical body and derives its name because it is nourished by the food eaten by the creature. It consists of 5 organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and 5 organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals and anus).

The Vital Air Sheath :—Is the five-fold faculties of perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), excretion (faeces, urine, sperm, sputum, sweat etc.), digestion (stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix), circulation (blood stream, artery, vein, capillary, heart) and thinking (the power to entertain, absorb and assimilate new information and thought).

The Mental Sheath :—It consists of the equipment which receives external stimuli through the sense organs and links it to the organs of action. Integrated response of body to the stimuli is done through the mind sheath. It is a continuous flow of thoughts. Because the mind is characterised by being in a state of flux, the mind (mental sheath), which is like a clerk, receives information (as stimuli) from the organs of perception and dispatches them to either the organs of action or the

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intellect when certain situations demand intelligent thinking and discrimination. Therefore, the mental sheath controls the vital air sheath and the food sheath.

The Intellect Sheath :—It acts as a controlling mechanism over the mind; It regulates, filters and modifies the response to the various stimuli. It has the discriminatory power which the mind, left alone to its own self, lacks.

The intellect sheath is the chief of the whole setup—in fact it controls the mind sheath, and through it, the functioning of the creature. It is the task master that directs the reckless horde of school boys running amok hither and thither, as it were. Those boys who obey this teacher become civilised and educated, while the rest of the bunch remains buffoons or ruffians. The intellect can distinguish between the good and the bad, which the mental sheath cannot. The intellect can see beyond the realm of the known while the mind cannot. The intellect sheath is the spring board for all ideas and ideologies. The intellect helps to stabilise and channelise the mind even as the dam controls the river and harnesses its immense energy to produce powerful electricity.

These two sheaths—the mind and the intellect—are called the subtle sheaths or bodies. They have no physical structure in conventional terms like the gross or physical body called the food sheath or Anna Maya Kosh (consisting of the organs of perception and organs of action) as well as the air sheath (called the Pran Maya Kosh) of the creature. This subtle sheath has only functional aspect. The mental and intellect sheaths are like software of a computer vis-ë-vis the food and vital sheaths which resemble the hardware paraphernalia of the entire system.

The Bliss Sheath :—Is the innermost sheath surrounding the Atma/the soul. It consists of 'inherent tendencies' or 'Vasanas' and 'Vrittis' before they are manifested into thoughts or actions. The intellect, mind etc. perform under the guidance and control of the bliss sheath. It is so-called because an individual experiences relative bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness, peace and tranquility when he is associated with it.

In the waking and dream states, a man experiences constant agitation of the mind, but once he reaches the realm of deep sleep state (bliss sheaths), he feels undisturbed, tranquil, peaceful and full of bliss. All agitations cease here. It is a relative experience vis-ë-vis the other sheaths. This sheath is also called the Causal Body of the creature.

The five sheaths are all inane, inert and inactive, and constitute of matter. This together forms the personality of the Jiva. He is conscious of all that his happening around him but these 5 sheaths are inert themselves. So, naturally, there must be something distinct and separate from these sheaths that lend the Jiva the so-called life or consciousness. That factor which lends life or consciousness to the Jiva is called Atma, pure

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consciousness or the pure self of the creature. It is also the true identity or self of the Jiva.

	Deep sleeper	⇔	Causal body	
Personality of the →	Dreamer	⇔	Subtle body	←Atma
Jiva (creature)	Waker	⇔	Gross body	

Diagram showing interaction between the Jiva and the Atma.

Please also refer to Lanka Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 38-39 for the concept of the five sheaths. The full concept of the Atma and the different sheaths and bodies has been explained in detail in Appendix no.2 of this book.]

बुद्धेस्त्रिधा वृत्तिरपीह दृश्यते स्वप्नादिभेदेन गुणत्रयात्मनः।
अन्योन्यतोऽस्मिन्व्यभिचारतो मृषा नित्ये परे ब्रह्मणि केवले शिवे।। 32।।

buddhestridhā vṛttirapīha dṛśyate
svapnādibhedena guṇatrayātmanaḥ /
anyonyato'sminvyabhicārato mṛṣā
nitye pare brahmaṇi kevale śive //

The mind-intellect inherently has three types Gunas[1] or qualities and virtues that determine its fundamental functioning and character. These in turn determine the basic and inherent tendencies and inclinations, called Vrittis that the creature possesses. These special distinguishing virtues and characteristics resemble the 3 states of consciousness in which the creature exists, viz.—(a) the waking state, (b) the dream state, (c) and the deep sleep state of consciousness, which are called the Jagrat, the Swapana and the Sushupti states of consciousness[2] respectively.

These 3 states of consciousness appear to be theoretically isolated chambers, but the actual ground level situation is that they interact with each other (i.e. they cannot be treated in isolation or as isolated entities in water-tight compartments). That is, the mind constantly strays from one state to another. The mind and intellect, called the subtle body that comes in direct contact with the Atma, is corrupted by the combined influences, or pulls and tugs of all these three. Since these entities are corruptible, the pure and supreme consciousness—which is Atma which is an image of the incorruptible, supreme and transcendental Brahm, which is the supreme truth or reality that is called 'Shiva' (one that is beautiful, auspicious, eternal, wise, enlightened and truthful beyond doubt)—obviously cannot be any of these entities.

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Therefore, to accuse the Atma of having any of the three Gunas depicted by the mind and intellect, or the different Vrittis that are consequential of these Gunas, and the resultant behaviour of the creature resembling the three states mentioned above are all founded on hearsay and fallacious reasoning, and is wrong and misleading (32).

[Note—[1]The three Gunas—The three characteristics inherent present in the creature are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the 'Vrittis and Vasanas' (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its soul as a covering or veil.

(a) 'Sat Guna or quality' is the noble, virtuous, auspicious and good qualities present in a creature, (b) 'Raj Guna or quality' pertains to worldly passions, desires and ambition etc., while (c) 'Tam Guna or quality' is the lowest and meanest of the 3 qualities leading to various vices, evils, sins, perversions etc. The permutations and combinations of these 3 qualities create a particular nature of an individual giving him his individuality and his special characters which are unique to him; they determine his temperament, behaviour, thought process et al. Two individuals having the same external form of the gross body—e.g. two men—might look very much alike but they vary immensely in their nature, habit, behaviour, thinking, outlook, action and deeds, wisdom and way of living. This is what is meant when it said that a creature has to roam in 84 Lakh (1 lakh = 1,00,000) wombs or forms of life; it is only a metaphor—it does not mean an actual, countable specific number that there are actually and physically 84 Lakh types of bodies of living beings; it only symbolically refers to the huge possibilities that are possible with these three 'Gunas' and their different combinations that can imaginably produce a myriad variety of creation that can be created with these three basic qualities and their various sub classes of qualities.

The Satwic quality or Guna is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satwic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature such as good and positive virtuous such as righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, the positive qualities of service, benevolence, mercy, devotion, wisdom, holiness, piety etc.

The Rajsic quality or Guna can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to the case with Satwic quality. Rajsic tendencies are the second best quality which produces worldly

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desires, ambitions, passions, selfishness, various obsessions, desire to sustain and expand etc.

The Tamsic quality or Guna covering the soul is like a foetus in the womb covered by the embryonic membrane—they cannot be removed easily and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling requiring time and patience. It is the basest and the lowliest of the three characteristics, the worst type to posses, and is marked by such negative traits as sin, evil, perversions, immorality, vices, misdemeanors, anger, inertia, delusions, deception, gloom, ignorance et al.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajsic' or 'Tamsic' qualities.

[2]The States of Existence :—The Atma (soul) has three states of existence in a creature —the waking state, the dream state, and the deep sleep state of existence or consciousness. During the 'waking state', the Atma acts through the gross body (the physical body) of a man in its interaction with the outside world. During the 'dream state of existence', the Atma withdraws from the gross body and limits its interaction to the subtle body (the mind-intellect complex). During the 'deep sleep state of existence', the Atma withdraws itself into the causal body consisting of 'Vasanas' (inherent passions and desires) and 'Vrittis' (inherent tendencies and inclinations).

To explain the above concept, we may take the help of diagram and illustration:—

Man = Pure consciousness or Atma + Causal body (Vasanas)

+ Subtle body (mind-intellect) + Gross body (sense organs)

The body-mind-intellect is inane and inert. The live factor is the pure consciousness or Atma. This pure consciousness functions through its association with the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body, or in other words, the deep sleeper, the dreamer and the waker state of consciousness.

Body	*(Consisting of)*		*Called the*	
	Gross body (sense organs)	⇔	Waker	
Man →	Subtle body (mind-intellect)	⇔	Dreamer	←Ātmā (pure-
	Causal body (Vāsanās)	⇔	Deep sleeper	consciousness)

This combination of 'waker-dreamer-deep sleeper' states of consciousness of a man is called Microcosm. The pure consciousness has its independent existence from the above three states, and this independence is called the 4th state of consciousness called the 'Turiya

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state' or the blissful state of consciousness (चिदानन्द) which has the bliss sheath as its external boundary.

According to Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma resides in the heart of the creature which is in an 8-petal lotus. The tendrils (केसर) of this lotus described in this Upanishad represent the waking state of consciousness, the stalk (कर्णिका) represents the dream state of conscious, and the thalamus (लिंग) represents the deep sleep state of consciousness. When a creature abandons/discards the metaphoric habitat or dwelling in the 8-petal lotus represents by his heart and rises above its precincts (just like a householder snapping all his relationships with his home and takes to the path of Vanprastha), it obtains the forth state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state'. Eventually, when the creature, in the form of his subtle Atma (which according to the definition given to it by the Upanishad, inter alia, is 'Hans' which means a 'Swan' and is a metaphor for divinity, purity and wisdom) merges with or dissolves in the cosmic 'Naad' (all-pervading subtle sound in the cosmos), then the final or the so-called 'Turiyateet' stage is achieved (verse no. 8).

The brain has two components—the intellect and the mind. The former is under the direct control of the Atma while the mind is subordinate to the intellect. The mind receives worldly stimuli through the sense organs, passes them to the intellect, obtains instructions from the intellect and passes them on to the organs of action —this state prevails when the man is 'awake'.

Now, when he is asleep, there are two stages —either he dreams or he does not. During the 'dream state', the inherent Vasanas (the hidden passions, yearning and desires) come into play at the sub conscious level and the mind lives up to all those Vasanas in an imaginary world. But when there is no dream, i.e., during the 'deep sleep state' of consciousness, the Atma is freed from interference and it reverts back to its original form of being 'nothingness, having no feelings and no emotions', just like the case wherein the mirror is removed from the front of a man and his image vanishes from it and the image reverts back or shrinks into its primary source or object, which in this case is the man himself whose image was formed in the mirror. The Atma is an image of the supreme Brahm. When the mirror of the mind-intellect is removed, it (Atma) reverts back to its primary form which is Brahm. So, it is the 'deep sleep state of consciousness' in which the creature comes in direct contact of his true identity or true self, which is called Atma or pure consciousness.

For the external world, a sleeping man is as good as being dead. For example, if a sleeping man is attacked by someone, he won't resist;

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he won't even know what has happened just in front of him while he was asleep. He is not dead, but for all practical purposes 'he is as good as dead'. He neither feels pain nor happiness when in a deep sleep state of existence, which is beyond the dream state of sleep. The 'deep sleep state' is called 'Swaprant'—literally meaning 'in a state of suspended animation, or a self-imposed state of coma, or a state of being virtually dead, or coming to a stage voluntarily which is almost like being dead but is not actual death'.

The last stage, called 'Turiyateet', goes beyond the 3rd stage when a man wakes up into this world but remains 'virtually blind or sleeping' as far as his mind is concerned in relation to the gross world. Therefore, he remains awake but does not see; he does not smell, taste, feel and speak. Since all external stimuli fail to arouse his brain, he remains like 'a man sleep-walking'. In the absence of sensory perceptions, he does not feel neither pain nor sorrows, nor happiness and joys. He remains totally oblivious to them. He lives in a state of complete blissfulness.]

देहेन्द्रियप्राणमनश्चिदात्मनां सङ्घादजस्रं परिवर्तते धियः।
वृत्तिस्तमोमूलतयाज्ञलक्षणा यावद्भवेत्तावदसौ भवोद्भवः॥33॥

dehendriyaprāṇamanaścidātmanāṃ
saṅghādajasraṃ parivartate dhiyaḥ /
vṛttistamomūlatayājñalakṣaṇā
yāvadbhavettāvadasau bhavodbhavaḥ //

The inherent tendencies and inclinations of the intellect, called its Vritti[1], are always changing, i.e. the mind is in a state of flux[2] because of its constant association with the body (i.e. the gross body), the sense organs (numbering ten), the Prans (numbering five; the vital airs—see verse no. 29), the mind-intellect complex (called the subtle body) and the pure consciousness called the Atma. Since this tendency—to fluctuate, be indecisive and in a state of flux, be subject to the influence of the delusory, misleading, erroneous and deception creating inputs/stimuli from the external world, be attached to the gross and perishable things rather than the imperishable truth which is the ultimate reality—has its origin in the quality called Tamogun[3] (characterized by gloom, delusions, deceit, perversions et al.) which is synonymous with ignorance and darkness. Therefore, as long as it stays/lasts, the creature has to continue taking birth in this mundane, entrapping, deluding, artificial and tormenting world (33).

[Note :—[1] Vasanas and Vrittis— The pure consciousness (Atma) is

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the core of a man's personality. It is infinite, pure, all-pervading, omniscient, enlightened, changeless and supreme truth/reality. However, its infinite nature is clouded by the various Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations) and Vasanas (desires and passion inherent in a man) resulting in the creation of a finite, limited, impure, corrupt, not fully enlightened, ever changing personality of the human being—such a person is called the 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer' entity. When the various Vrittis or Vasanas are eliminated or excluded (i.e., catharised), the attitude undergoes transformation and metamorphosis from a perceiver-feeler-thinker entity (corresponding to the gross body, the mind and intellect collectively called the subtle body) into simple pure consciousness which, in reality, is the true identity of the creature.

[2]Mental Flux—The five states of the mind are the following—(i) Kshipta, (ii) Mudh, (iii) Vikshipta, (iv) Ekagra and (v) Nirudha. The 'Kshipta' is the worst type of mind characterised by extreme recklessness and restlessness. It is susceptible to various negative traits such as confusion, conflicts, anger, anxiety, worry, tension, agitations of all kinds etc.

The 'Mudh' is the dull, inert and indolent state of mind. These first two states of mind are predominantly 'Tamas' in nature.

The 'Vikshipta' state is a 'distracted' state of mind in which it swings between the extremes of calmness and agitation. This is a 'Rajsic' quality.

The 'Ekagra' state is a focused or concentrated mind. It is a state in which the mind can keep alert and pin-pointed on any subject it is focusing upon. It helps to cultivate discipline in the aspirant.

The 'Nirudha' state is that state of mind in which there is no mental flux of any kind. It is a kind of trance like state of bliss and happiness. The last two states of mind are called 'Satvik' qualities of the creature.

[3]Tamogun is the most mean and basest of the three qualities that a creature has—viz. the Sat, Raj and Tam in this order. See verse no.32 above.]

नेतिप्रमाणेन निराकृताखिलो हृदा समास्वादितचिद्घनामृतः।
त्यजेदशेषं जगदात्तसद्रसं पीत्वा यथाम्भः प्रजहाति तत्फलम्॥ 34॥

netipramāṇena nirākṛtākhilo
hṛdā samāsvāditacidghanāmṛtaḥ /
tyajedaśeṣaṃ jagadāttasadrasaṃ
pītvā yathāmbhaḥ prajahāti tatphalam //

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The wise one should exclude and abandon from his heart the delusory world (or become disinterested in it, or prohibit it from influencing and impinging on the wisdom of the soul), and regard it as untruthful, faulty, illusory, transient and perishable relying upon the axiomatic doctrine 'Neti-Neti' etc. proclaimed by the Vedas[1]. Instead, the creature should enjoy the taste of nectar represented by eternal, supreme bliss of the pure consciousness established in the creature's own heart. In other words, the creature should accept the essence of the whole existence, which is the true, eternal, sublime and pure Brahm represented by the eternal blissful Atma present in the bosom of the creature[2]. The creature should forsake the rest of the world like a person who drinks the milk of the coconut fruit and throws away its shell (34).

[Note :—[1]The words Neti-Neti mean 'neither this nor that'. Please also see verse no. 17 above. So, this verse refers to the gradual elimination process or negation process whereby the creature first learns what the essential constituents that make up this existence are. Then it starts reflecting on each individual ingredient and deciding whether it reflects its true and un-adulterated identity or not. If not, then it goes to the next ingredient, and then successively all the elements that constitute this worldly existence, one after another, are judged as to their truthfulness and usefulness. Then the wise and erudite creature starts to eliminate them one by one as not being true and only illusory like water in a desert on a hot day. Gradually, by this elimination process, it will find that out of all the constituent factors, it is the Atma/soul/pure consciousness that is the only truth and real identity of not only the creature but also of the rest of the living world which remains. Further a deep peep into its other aspects shows that this Atma is synonymous with the Parmatma who is the supreme, cosmic Soul of the creation. It is then—when the above clutter and density of fog-like cloud of endless chain of claims and counter-claims are set aside and all debates and confusions are laid to rest—that the creature realises that its 'true self' is the same as the Parmatma, and this true self is called the Atma which is present in all the creature uniformly. If this fact firmly takes root in his mind and intellect—and this is self-realisation and enlightenment—the creature further deduces that all the characteristics, attributes, qualities, qualifications and honours which are applicable to the Parmatma should also be applicable to it. This realisation fills it with immense bliss, peace, tranquility, serenity, joy and happiness. All the faults, agitations, blemishes, doubts and confusions are catheterised once and for all.

[2]The example of the nectar drinking bee would clear the meaning. The bee alights on the flower and single mindedly hunts for the nectar. It

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remains focused on its search and does not get distracted by any other thing. Once it finds nectar, it becomes so engrossed in it that it is sometimes even trapped by the petals of the flower if it happens to close during the night as some flowers do. Being concerned with the nectar and nothing else, the bee is oblivious of the colour and the habitat of the flower. And once it has drunk it, it abandons the flower as if it has nothing to do with it. In the present case, when the creature has drunk the nectar of truth, the rest of the world is abandoned by it even as the bee abandons the flower.]

कदाचिदात्मा न मृतो न जायते न क्षीयते नापि विवर्धतेऽनवः।
निरस्तसर्वातिशयः सुखात्मकः स्वयम्प्रभः सर्वगतोऽयमद्वयः।। 35।।

kadācidātmā na mṛto na jāyate
na kṣīyate nāpi vivardhate'navaḥ /
nirastasarvātiśayaḥ sukhātmakaḥ
svayamprabhaḥ sarvagato'yamadvayaḥ //

The Atma (pure consciousness) does not die or take birth; it never diminishes nor increases. It is most ancient and primeval, free from all adjectives and descriptions, an image of peace, bliss and happiness, is self illuminated, is all-pervading and omnipresent, and is peerless, matchless, unique and without a parallel (35).

एवंविधे ज्ञानमये सुखात्मके कथं भवो दुःखमयः प्रतीयते।
अज्ञानतोऽध्यासवशात्प्रकाशते ज्ञाने विलीयेत विरोधतः क्षणात्।। 36।।

evaṃvidhe jñānamaye sukhātmake
katham bhavo duḥkhamayaḥ pratīyate /
ajñānato'dhyāsavaśātprakāśate
jñāne vilīyeta virodhataḥ kṣaṇāt //

That which is an embodiment or image of supreme bliss and truthful knowledge, how can there ever be a semblance of sorrows, anguish, pains, torments and consternations associated with this world in such an exalted entity (which the Atma is)? Such a conception or perception is a total falsehood, very misleading and deceptive, and arising out of ignorance. It will vanish in a moment under the light of knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment because Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment) and Agyan (ignorance or lack of knowledge) are mutually opposed (inimical and contradictory) to each other (36).

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यदन्यदन्यत्र विभाव्यते भ्रमादध्यासमित्याहुरमुं विपश्चितः।
असर्पभूतेऽहिविभावनं यथा रज्ज्वादिके तद्वदपीश्वरे जगत्।।37।।

yadanyadanyatra vibhāvyate bhramāda-
dhyāsamityāhuramuṃ vipaścitaḥ /
asarpabhūte'hivibhāvanaṃ yathā
rajjvādike tadvadapīśvare jagat //

Experts have defined 'Adhyas' as mistakenly—out of ignorance and lack of correct knowledge—recognising or identifying something to be true which in reality it is not (e.g. thinking that the entity 'A' is not A but 'B' and vice-versa). It is misperception and misinterpretation of the reality. Even as one mistakes a rope for a serpent, the gross, artificial world is erroneously imposed on the Ishwar; it is wrongly thought that Ishwar (the macrocosmic causal body of the supreme transcendental Soul of the creation called Brahm) has all the characters of this world, because the world is its creation. (37).

[Note—Since the world is a conception of the mind, for it is the mind which conjures up a magical world according to its inherent tendencies and inclinations under the influence of Maya as described earlier, to say that Atma has done it is a fallacious misrepresentation of facts. The cause of this error is that the Atma is surrounded by Maya, and like the crystal getting affected by the colour of the veil that surrounds it, the Atma also appears to depict all the qualities and characters of Maya, and these include those of the world because the world itself is coloured by the colour of Maya, so to say. This concept of a crystal acquiring the colour of the covering veil has been explained earlier in verse no.31.]

विकल्पमायारहिते चिदात्मकऽहङ्कार एष प्रथमः प्रकल्पितः।
अध्यास एवात्मनि सर्वकारणे निरामये ब्रह्मणि केवले परे।।38।।

vikalpamāyārahite cidātmaka-
'haṅkāra eṣa prathamaḥ prakalpitaḥ /
adhyāsa evātmani sarvakāraṇe
nirāmaye brahamaṇi kevale pare //

The Brahm (the supreme Lord) is without an alternative, is beyond all forms of doubts, is free of all delusions called Maya, is the very cause of all creation, is free from all diseases associated with this existence that afflict this world of delusions, such as the myriad faults, negative traits, various blemishes and innumerable other corrupting influences that are the hallmarks of this world, is peerless and without

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a parallel, and is pure, eternal and truthful consciousness. The first mistake in relation to this only transcendental supreme cosmic Atma called Brahm is to associate with him the Tamas quality of 'Ahankar' (pride, ego, arrogance, vanity and haughtiness) [Obviously, if the Brahm is an immaculate entity then it is incredulous to attribute it with any quality that has a negative connotation, and Ahankar is definitely one such negative quality.] (38).

इच्छादिरागादिसुखादिधार्मिकाः सदा धियः संसृतिहेतवः परे।
यस्मात्प्रसुप्तौ तदभावतः परः सुखस्वरूपेण विभाव्यते हि नः।।39।।

icchādirāgādisukhādidharmikāḥ
sadā dhiyaḥ saṃsṛtihetavaḥ pare /
yasmātprasuptau tadabhāvataḥ paraḥ
sukhasvarūpeṇa vibhāvyate hi naḥ //

To associate the Atma, which is only a disinterested and dispassionate witness to all, with the all the different notions and contradictory emotions which are associated with the mind according to its inherent tendencies and inclinations—such as either having desires or not having any, either having mental attachments, love and affections or having dispassion, hatred, revulsion, animosity, enmity, ill-will, jealousy and malice, and either having happiness or sorrows—is the basic cause of this world comprising of birth and death coming into being.

The evidence lies in the fact that during the deep sleep state of consciousness, all these feelings completely vanish or are totally eliminated, resulting in experiencing of sublimity, the peaceful and blissful nature of the Atma. (39).

[Note :—As has been explained earlier, during the deep sleep state of consciousness, the Atma ceases to be bothered by the inputs from the external world, and the mind-intellect stops disturbing it. The latter is virtually non-existent during this state. So, the Atma comes face to face with its own true nature, which is peaceful and blissful. Therefore, how can it be said that the true nature of the Atma is to have any attachment or hatred, have any happiness or sorrow, and having any desires or yearnings. These notions are the characteristic features of this world which takes birth and dies, resulting in a constant cycle of sorrows and happiness, or of love and animosity, or desires and more desires. Since they do not exist in the Atma, it cannot have die and take birth.

Please also refer to verse nos. 31-34 and footnote to verse no. 34.]

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अनाद्यविद्योद्भवबुद्धिबिम्बितो जीवः प्रकाशोऽयमितीर्यते चितः।
आत्मा धियः साक्षितया पृथक् स्थितो बुद्ध्यापरिच्छन्नपरः स एव हि।। 40।।

anādyavidyodbhavabuddhibimbito
jīvaḥ prakāśo'yamitīryate citaḥ /
ātmā dhiyaḥ sākṣitayā pṛthak sthito
buddhyāparicchinnaparaḥ sa eva hi //

It is out of eternal ignorance of the reality that the intellect and mind seems to have the light known as Chetan, or conscious factor known as life. In other words, the intellect and mind appears to exhibit certain traits such as intelligence, wisdom, thinking capabilities and discrimination powers, but these are because of its association with the pure consciousness or Atma with which it is closely associated during the waking state of existence. The reflection of the conscious factor in the mind-intellect combine results in the creation of an entity known as the Jiva, or a living creature. The Jiva, in effect therefore, appears to be the reflection of the glowing illumination of the conscious Atma on the screen of the mind-intellect sheath combine. Logically therefore, the Jiva and its habitat the world exist only during the waking state of consciousness. And since the world is a proven false entity having an imaginary existence as a creative conception of the mind, the Jiva who lives in it and is an integral part of the world is also false.

But the fact is quite different—the Atma is a separate entity, it is only a witness to the mind-intellect complex. They also have different habitats—the Atma resides in the causal body while the mind-intellect if the subtle body. That supreme conscious Atma is beyond the reach of and purview of the mind-intellect apparatus (40).

[Note :—For the concept of Jiva (creature), please also refer to (a) Baal Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 48-52 and (b) Ayodhya Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 20-23.

चिद्बिम्बसाक्ष्यात्मधियां प्रसङ्गतस्त्वेकत्र वासादनलाक्तलोहवत्।
अन्योन्यमध्यासवशात्प्रतीयते जडाजडत्वं च चिदात्मचेतसोः।। 41।।

cidbimbasākṣyātmadhiyāṃ prasaṅgata-
stvekatra vāsādanalāktalohavat /
anyonyamadhyāsavaśātpratīyate
jaḍājaḍatvaṃ ca cidātmacetasoḥ //

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The Atma which is only a witness to everything (and not a participant) and which is pure undiluted consciousness (the causal body), when it acts through and in close association with the mind-intellect complex (the subtle body), the result is that the Atma's quality of undiluted purity, life-infusing consciousness, enlightenment, wisdom and erudition are superimposed and injected on the inane, inert and lifeless apparatus called the mind-intellect, while at the same time the latter's grossness appears to be superimposed and injected in the former.

This impression of possessing a particular set of Gunas or quality, characteristic and virtues which are not inherent/intrinsic to a particular entity, but it appears to possess it nevertheless because of its close proximity with another entity, is called 'Anonyadhyas'. This example is found in a piece of iron made red hot by coming in contact with fire[1].

As a result of this misjudgment or misconception, we begin to consider the five inert, inane layers—stretching from the bliss sheath to the food sheath—as the pure consciousness or Atma personified as the entity known as the creature or Jiva[2] (41).

[Note—[1]When iron is heated in high-temperature fire, it glows red hot. It appears to have acquired the glow, hotness and temperature of the fire in its whole mass or body, and the fire appears to have spread uniformly across every pore and molecule of the iron piece. They cannot be separated from one another. The iron appears to be a 'ball of fire' and the fire appears to be shaped like a 'ball of iron'. Similarly, the subtle body (i.e. mind-intellect complex) becomes soaked by the fiery glow of super consciousness of the Atma so much so that the latter and the former appear to be inseparable from each other. But this is not the actual case.

[2]That is, we erroneously begin to consider the Atma, which is the true identity of the Jiva/creature as being synonymous with the visible, corrupted form of the Jiva consisting of the gross body, the subtle body and the casual body.]

गुरोः सकाशादपि वेदवाक्यतः सञ्जातविद्यानुभवो निरीक्ष्य तम्।
स्वात्मानमात्मस्थमुपाधिवर्जितं त्यजेदशेषं जडमात्मगोचरम्॥42॥

guroḥ sakāśādapi vedabākyataḥ /
sañjātavidyānubhavo nirīkṣya tam /
svātmānamātmasthamupādhivarjitaṃ
tyajedaśeṣaṃ jaḍamātmagocaram //

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So, one should take up the company of a wise and learned teacher called a Guru, and at the same time, rely on the axiomatic doctrines expounded in the form of the great declarations or sayings of the Vedas (see note to verse no. 27). By doing so and by contemplation, reflection and meditation, one should become aware of the true nature of the pure conscious self and experience it.

When this self-realisation or awareness, which is called true enlightenment and pure erudition about the formless, attributeless and pure conscious Atma residing in one's heart dawns on the creature, it should completely forsake the inert, inane and gross forms of products, such as the body etc. which were hitherto erroneously regarded as having life and consciousness and were treated as the identity of the creature (42).

[Note :—In brief, once the creature realises that what he mistakenly thought was his pure self was in fact lifeless and dead, he should immediately abandon it. He must realise that his true form is the innermost Atma/soul and not the inane sheaths surrounding it.]

प्रकाशरूपोऽहमजोऽहमद्वयोऽसकृद्विभातोऽहमतीव निर्मलः।
विशुद्धविज्ञानघनो निरामयः सम्पूर्ण आनन्दमयोऽहमक्रियः॥ 43॥

prakāśarūpo'hamajo'hamadvayo-
'sakṛdvibhāto'hamatīva nirmalaḥ /
viśuddhavijñānaghano nirāmayaḥ
sampūrṇa ānandamayo'hamakriyaḥ //

[The true nature of the Atma is described below in verse nos. 43-44—] 'I' (the Atma) am self illuminated, am without a birth or beginning (i.e. I am what I am, and have no progenitor), am peerless, without a second or any parallel, am eternal, constant, perpetual and infinite, am pure consciousness which can be experienced and witnessed, am most sublime, pristine pure, undiluted and uncorrupt, am an embodiment and a treasury of pure, pristine knowledge that is well established and irrefutable, am disease free and healthy (i.e. without any faults associated with the causal body, the gross body and the subtle body)[1], am without any inclination to do anything (i.e. not being attached to any deed or action done by the body; to be dispassionate, detached and indifferent to all deeds and actions, and be simply a witness to whatever is happening without getting passionate about or involved in it), and am an embodiment or image

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of supreme calm, serenity, bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness, peace and tranquility (43).

[Note—[1]The faults associated with the causal body pertains to Maya and its attendant problems such as the creation of various Vasanas and Vrittis; the faults of the subtle body are related to the mind and intellect such as ignorance, false beliefs and convictions, false determines and wrong instructions to the organs of the body etc.; the faults pertaining to the gross body are obviously the innumerable problems related with it, such as diseases, old age and decay, bad deeds and actions, and such other negative things that have direct bearing on the body.]

सदैव मुक्तोऽहमचिन्त्यशक्तिमानतीन्द्रियज्ञानमविक्रियात्मकः।
अनन्तपारोऽहमहर्निशं बुधैर्विभावितोऽहं हृदि वेदवादिभिः।।44।।

sadaiva mukto'hamacintyaśaktimān-
atīndriyajñānamavikriyātmakaḥ /
anantapāro'hamaharniśaṃ budhai-
rvibhāvito'haṃ hṛdi vedavādibhiḥ //

I am always and eternally liberated and free from any shackles, am a fountain-head of an unfathomable, bountiful, immense and measureless stupendous source of infinite cosmic energy which is beyond comprehension and imagination, am without any body having gross organs which impose limitations (i.e. I am formless and attributeless, and at the same time, boundless), am an image and an embodiment of Gyan (true knowledge, erudition and wisdom), am without any deformations and faults (such as a changing, fidgety and faltering nature), and am beyond imagination or visualization because I am without a beginning or end.

Experts in the Vedas (i.e. those who are deeply steeped in the wisdom propounded by the Vedas) always contemplate upon me (i.e. fix their attention and try to experience me) in their hearts (44).

[Note :—Verse nos. 43-44 described the nature of the Atma of the creature. It is an extension of the concept declared by the 4 great sayings of the Vedas as described in verse nos. 24-27 of this Canto earlier. The word 'I' and 'Me' refer to the Atma.

In this context it is pertinent to quote another great version of Ramayan called Ram Charit Manas by the legendary saint poet philosopher Goswami Tulsidas. While describing the Atma in Lanka Kanda, Doha 117, Chaupai 2-5, it says "The Jiva represented by its Atma is immortal and eternal. It is a fraction of the supreme Ishwar who is the cosmic

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divinity. It is conscious, faultless, untainted by Maya, and a natural treasure of happiness and bliss. Such an exalted soul has allowed itself to be dominated and influenced by Maya. It has been caught in the trap laid on its own like a parrot or a monkey. That which is gross and lifeless (the materialistic world) has been tied to that which is inherently subtle and sublime (the Atma) by a strong knot. Though this knot is misconceived and imaginary, it is nevertheless difficult to untie. Ever since the Atma had allowed itself to be knotted in the Maya-created snare, it has become what is called 'worldly' or that which appears to belong to the world. Obviously, there can be no happiness until this knot is untied. The Vedas and Purans have prescribed a number of ways to do it."]

एवं सदात्मानमखण्डितात्मना विचारमाणस्य विशुद्धभावना।
हन्यादविद्यामचिरेण कारकै रसायनं यद्वदुपासितं रुजः।।45।।

evaṃ sadātmānamakhaṇḍitātmanā
vicāramāṇasya viśuddhabhāvanā /
hanyādavidyāmacireṇa kārakai
rasāyanaṃ yadvadupāsitaṃ rujaḥ //

This constant contemplation and deep reflection upon the true and pure super consciousness residing in the bosom of a creature creates a sense of emotional purity and clarified sense of discrimination and wisdom, which in turn destroys/eliminates/removes/catheterizes the fallacious and erroneous feeling of being the 'doer' of deeds and its accompanying lack of correct perception or interpretation of the self, which is called Avidya (ignorance or lack of proper and truthful knowledge). [That is, the creature realises that the Atma is not the 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer' entity as it was mistakenly made out to be.] This is similar to the case when the constant use of medicine can get rid of the disease from its roots (45).

[Note :—For the details of 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer' entity as well as the concept of 'doer', please also refer to verse no. 20 and note to verse no. 34 of this Canto.]

विविक्त आसीन उपारतेन्द्रियो विनिर्जितात्मा विमलान्तराशयः।
विभावयेदेकमनन्यसाधनो विज्ञानदृक्केवल आत्मसंस्थितः।।46।।

vivikta āsīna upāratendriyo
vinirjitātmā vimalāntarāśayaḥ /
vibhāvayedekamananyasādhano
vijñānadṛkkevala ātmasaṃsthitaḥ //

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A person desirous of reflecting upon the true, pure, real and uncorrupted form of the Atma should sit in a lonely and calm place (which is undisturbed, peaceful, serene and secluded), remove (de-link or retract) his sense organs from their objects in this world, and exercise control over (i.e. put a restraint upon) his subtle body. [That is, he must first start from the outer gross organs of the body by controlling them from swerving towards their respective objects of gratification in this world, and then proceed gradually inwards step by step. As a second step, he should restrain his subtle body consisting of the mind and intellect.]

He must not take the help of any other means (i.e. he must not be confused by so many doctrines and paths to achieve his object as well as various remedies prescribed by so many advisors or teachers). Instead, he should rely on introspection and insight acquired by the pursuance of truthful knowledge only. He should transfix (i.e. rivet and focus) his attention (i.e. wean it away from all diversionary tendencies) on the Atma or pure consciousness with a mind and intellect that have been purified and cleansed of their all their impurities and corruptions. After all this preparatory stage, he should introspect, think, contemplate, meditate and deeply reflect upon nothing else but the Atma/pure consciousness (46).

[Note :—The main objective of verse no. 46 is to concentrate the mind on the supreme truth or reality which is pure consciousness residing in the heart or bosom of the seeker. The mind which controls the food sheath (i.e. sense organs) is full of agitation, restlessness and flux. It has to be controlled and guided by the intellect. So, the first step is to control and withdraw the mind from all external distractions of this world. This can be done by three means—(i) The Path of Karma, or doing assigned duties without being attached to them; (ii) The Path of Devotion or Worship and (iii) The Path of Knowledge. It is the third path which is being referred to in this verse. Please also refer Canto 7, verse nos. 59-60. By introspection, contemplation and deeply pondering over the matter and acquisition of truthful knowledge, we are able to distinguish and discriminate between what is true and pure, and what is falsehood, illusionary and corrupted. It helps us to eliminate all the unscrupulous activities and clutter, and instead divert our attention inwards. Taken differently, we can witness the divine, pure, self-illuminated spark of consciousness present in a dormant form in all of us by the following method—the Atma manifests itself through the gross body, the subtle body and the casual body. The gross body (sense organs) can be willfully controlled by the mind under the overall guidance of the intellect; the subtle body can be controlled by

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discrimination as well as proper and truthful knowledge. The causal body on the other hand, can be controlled by the integration and coordination of the subjective and objective minds. When all the 3 are controlled, the Vasanas and/or Vrittis (worldly passions and yearnings; the inherent tendencies and inclinations) clouding the Atma vanish. This results in the pure consciousness shining through the whole existence of the creature. See verse no. 47, footnote also.]

विश्वं यदेतत्परमात्मदर्शनं विलापयेदात्मनि सर्वकारणे।
पूर्णश्चिदानन्दमयोऽवतिष्ठते न वेद बाह्यं न च किञ्चिदान्तरम्।। 47।।

viśvaṃ yadetatparamātmadarśanaṃ
vilāpayedātmani sarvakāraṇe /
pūrṇaścidānandamayo'vatiṣṭhate
na veda bāhyaṃ na ca kiñcidāntaram //

'This world is nothing else but an image of the macrocosmic transcendental supreme Soul called Parmatma (which is the sublime, supreme, immutable and irrefutable truth and reality in this world)'—realising the truth of this maxim, the seeker should merge this world with the Atma (pure consciousness) which is the microscopic counterpart of the supreme Soul that resides in the heart of the creature.

In this way, when one establishes oneself, or identifies oneself with the pure consciousness which is sublime, blissful and eternal, the creature/seeker/aspirant attains supreme bliss, contentedness, peace and tranquility. As a result, being perpetually engrossed in bliss of self realisation and especially when the external world that had been disturbing him so far has been expunged from his mental record, he loses awareness or knowledge of any thing, whether internal or external to him (for he has literally merged himself with the all-pervading macrocosmic supreme Soul and remains in drinking the nectar of bliss and tranquility provided by it) (47).

[Note :—(i) The reader is advised to refer to verse no. 53 in this context. (ii) The external world exists only till the time the Atma perceives it through the mind-intellect apparatus. When the wise creature diverts its mind away from the world and focuses it on the inner self, the Atma loses awareness of the world. It begins to remain submerged in the joy of self realisation. It naturally avoids going back to the world that had been giving it so much trouble. With erudition and wisdom the creature also realises the falseness of the external world. So, once it tastes the nectar of peace and tranquility that comes with self realisation, it does not want to

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revert to the painful experience that it had when it was active in the external world.

As we have already seen earlier, the creature has three states of consciousness—the waking state when the pure consciousness functions through the gross body, the dreaming state when the pure consciousness functions through the subtle body, and the deep sleep state when the pure consciousness functions through the causal body. There is a 4th state called the 'Turiya' state also. The pure consciousness has its independent existence from the above 3 states, and this independence is called the 4th state of consciousness of the Atma and is called the 'Turiya state' or the blissful state of consciousness (fpnkuUn) which has the bliss sheath as its external covering.]

पूर्वं समाधेरखिलं विचिन्तयेदोङ्कारमात्रं सचराचरं जगत्।
तदेव वाच्यं प्रणवो हि वाचको विभाव्यतेऽज्ञानवशान्न बोधतः।।48।।

pūrvaṃ samādherakhilaṃ vicintaye-
doṅkāramātraṃ sacarācaraṃ jagat /
tadeva vācyaṃ praṇavo hi vācako
vibhāvyate'jñānavaśānna bodhataḥ //

Before the state of Samadhi[1] is achieved (as described in verse no.47), one must reflect and think that the whole animate as well as the inanimate (i.e. the movable and immovable) world consists of the ethereal and sublime entity known as 'OMKAR' whose word-symbol is the divine word OM. [This Omkar is also called Pranav and it is synonymous with Brahm.]

The OMKAR is the speaker or narrator, while the world is the expression of what the divine speaker wishes to express. In other words, the world symbolizes what the divine speaker OMKAR is trying to narrate, explain, elucidate, manifest, bring forth, express and reveal in understandable, discernible and visible form. Since narration and speaking necessitates the use of words, the divinity of OMKAR has been conceived in the form of the ethereal word OM. Hence, the whole world that speaks is nothing else but a revelation and manifestation of what the speaker wished to narrate. It is his expression[2].

It is out of ignorance (i.e. lack of correct and truthful knowledge and wisdom) that the world appears to be for real. As soon as wisdom and enlightenment dawns on the creature, none of such delusions and misconceptions about the authenticity of the world lasts or persist (48).

[Note :—[1]The concept of Samadhi :—Contemplation and meditation lead

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to Samadhi. Yogis also experience supreme bliss during Samadhi. Simply put, it is a trance like state when the consciousness has no perception of the external, physical world of sense objects and, on the contrary, it experiences the bliss of the pure self. This leads to an ecstatic state.

The term Samadhi is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Dha' which means to put or to place. To this root are added prefixes 'Sam' (well) and 'Aa' (fully). Thus the word Samadhi means 'putting or placing the mind fully well'. In Vedanta, Samadhi means the knowledge that identifies the Atma with Brahm. It is commonly used to mean 'absorption or meditation'. The state of Samadhi is free from the dual defects (faults) of duality (that the creature and Brahm are separate) and effort (diligence in deeds and actions aimed towards the goal). That is, during the state of Samadhi, the creature looses its self independent identity and no effort is then required to experience the bliss of the supreme realisation of the absolute Truth— which is the Atma and Brahm are the same, are infinite and eternal.

There are two types of Samadhis— (i) Savikalpa Samadhi (absorption characterised by the perception of division, distinction or difference) and (ii) Nirvikalpa Samadhi (absorption free from division, distinction or difference). The Savikalpa Samadhi is reached after long practice of the tenet 'I am Brahm' (i.e., there is no difference between me and Brahm). Unlike this practice wherein the seeker had to exert himself to maintain the thought that 'I am Brahm', during the Savikalpa Samadhi there is an effortless thought of 'I am Brahm'. This Samadhi is characterised by the perception of the distinction of the triumvirate consisting of (a) Meditator (Dhyatr), (b) Meditated object (Dheya) and (c) Meditation process (Dhyan). Though the Meditator has withdrawn his mind from all thoughts and maintains a continuous flow of a single pointed thought that 'I am Brahm', he still continues to have the distinction between (a) I, the Meditator, (b) the Object, that I am Brahm and (c) the very physical act of meditation. Nevertheless, by virtue of the strength of knowledge that 'he is Brahm', the triumvirate becomes illusionary or imaginary just like the perception of various shapes of water— such as whirlpool, wave, bubble, foam/froth etc. are noting else but water, or the water in a cup, a glass, a jar, a tray, a pond, a lake, a river, and ocean may have different names and contours but are water nonetheless. Sri Sankarcharya has cited the example of a clay elephant (Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Saar Sangraha, verse nos. 821-822) to say that the elephant form does appear inspite of the knowledge that it is, after all, clay. Similarly, inspite of the knowledge that everything is Brahm, the triumvirate does exist in Savikalpa Samadhi.

Nirvikalpa Samadhi— during this state, the ideal that I am the all-pervading Brahm takes firm root and it puts an end to all ignorance. The term means 'no division or distinction or difference'. Here the seeker has no distinction between the triad of meditator or meditated object and the process of meditation.

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The main difference between these two Samadhis is that in the former there is the 'knowledge or awareness' that I am Brahm while in the latter it is the 'being' of I am Brahm. The difference of knowing and being is quit evident. It is one thing to theoretically 'know' that I am Brahm and quite different to 'be' Brahm. When the thought I am Brahm becomes effortless and complete, the meditator loses the distinction between himself, the object (Brahm) and the process (meditation)— all merge into one entity. In this Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the meditator loses the distinction between himself (I) and the object (Brahm). As a result, the ego that 'I am meditating upon Brahm' is vanished, and with it, the triad. By extension, it means 'there is no experience of distinction between the knower (meditator) and the known (Brahm)'.

In Savikalpa Samadhi, the thought 'I am Brahm' is available for perception while in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the same thought is not available for perception. A lump of salt floating in water will be seen as distinct from water (Savikalpa Samadhi) but when that lump of salt dissolves in water, no one can see it; there is no distinction between the water and the salt (Nirvikalpa Samadhi).

The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the plunging of the consciousness into the ocean of bliss encapsulated inside the causal body of the creature. All ignorance pertaining to the world is dispelled and therefore the world comes to an end simply because it exists only due to ignorance. Age, caste, position, opinion— none of these is a bar in entering the chamber of the self during Samadhi. It is open to all who seek it.

To conclude, we can say that Samadhi means that state when the seeker attains the last stage in meditation when there is no agitation, and its place is taken over by utter silence or trance like state. In that silence, the cessation of the flow of thoughts results in annihilation of the mind, and with it, the body. When the thought processes cease, there can be no discrimination taking place. When discrimination ceases, the intellect cannot exist. Hence, in that final moment of silence, when the mind and intellect are dissolved—the thoughts are vanquished, the mind is conquered, discrimination is absent and the intellect is annihilated—the erstwhile individual merges with the infinite reality, resulting in supreme and endless bliss and beatitude.

The concept of Samadhi is also explained below and referred to in Lanka Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 53.

[2]That is, even as words spoken to express any thing do not have any physical existence, for they are simply vibrations in the air that travel in the form of waves from the speaker to the hearer of the sound, this world too does not have any physical existence that can be tangibly grasped. Its existence is there because it can be seen and perceived even as the sound is there because it can be heard. But even as sound waves traveling

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through ether cannot be caught hold of, the world too cannot be caught. Expression of what Omkar wished to say is a metaphoric way of saying that it is a revelation of what Brahm had conceived in his mind at the beginning of creation. Once produced, the same sound can have different meaning to different people; the same world revealed by the mind of Brahm had different meaning to different people depending upon their own mental caliber.]

अकारसंज्ञः पुरुषो हि विश्वको ह्युकारकस्तैजस ईर्यते क्रमात्।
प्राज्ञो मकारः परिपठ्यतेऽखिलैः समाधिपूर्वं न तु तत्त्वतो भवेत्।। 49।।

akārasaṃjñaḥ puruṣo hi viśvako
hyukārakastaijasa īryate kramāt /
prājño makāraḥ paripaṭhyate'khilaiḥ
samādhipūrvaṃ na tu tattvato bhavet //

The word OM has three letters—A, U, M. Out of these—'A' represents the Vishwa (i.e. the waking state of consciousness at the micro level), 'U' represents the Taijas (i.e. the dreamer state of consciousness at the micro level), and 'M' represents the Pragya (i.e. the deep sleeper state of consciousness at the micro level). This arrangement is suitable for the pre-Samadhi state. From the view point of fundamentals and essential truth, when correct knowledge is acquired by deep insight, there is no such distinction or separation or divisions between the three states of consciousness. [That is, as soon as Samadhi[1] is achieved, the three seemingly independent and distinctive existences dissolve and become interchangeable with one another; or in other words, they coalesce with each other and become one.] (49).

[Note :—(i) [1]The concept of Samadhi appearing in verse nos. 46-49 is that state when the seeker attains the last stage in meditation when there is no agitation, and its place is taken over by utter silence or trance like state. In that silence, the cessation of the flow of thoughts results in annihilation of the mind, and with it, the body. When the thought processes cease, there can be no discrimination taking place. When discrimination ceases, the intellect cannot exist. Hence, in that final moment of silence, when the mind and intellect are dissolved—the thoughts are vanquished, the mind is conquered, discrimination is absent and the intellect is annihilated—the erstwhile individual merges with the infinite reality, resulting in supreme and endless bliss. (ii) The world symbol OM represents the supreme macrocosmic Brahm and it constitutes of sound which is an element of space, which in turn is the subtlest amongst the five basic elements which are earth, fire, water, wind and space.]

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विश्वं त्वकारं पुरुषं विलापयेदुकारमध्ये बहुधा व्यवस्थितम्।
ततो मकारे प्रविलाप्य तैजसं द्वितीयवर्णं प्रणवस्य चान्तिमे।। 50।।

viśvaṃ tvakāraṃ puruṣaṃ vilāpaye-
dukāramadhye bahudhā vyavasthitam /
tato makāre pravilāpya taijasaṃ
dvitīyavarṇaṃ praṇavasya cāntime //

[The steps to be followed for enabling the seeker to coalesce all these three states of existence into one indivisible whole which is immutable and uniform, the state when Samadhi is achieved is achieved, is being outlined here.]

The seeker should focus his attention and endeavour to coalesce or merge the Vishwa representing the 'Viraat Purush' who has revealed himself in myriad of forms which are as variable as the world itself, and who is represented by the letter A of the word OM, with the second form called Taijas represented by the second letter U. Finally, coalesce or merge the first two with the third and the last letter M representing Pragya (50).

[Note—(1)Yoga is the medium to be employed for this purpose. The word Yoga means union of two entities, and meditation and contemplation. It is the union of the three states of consciousness that is the aim of Yoga; it brings about a merger of the individual soul with the cosmic Soul. Since any merger process entails a step by step progress, union of the Atma with the Parmatma would also need a patient and step by step progress.

(2) We have already seen in note to verse no.31 and 32 above about the three states in which the consciousness exists and the three types of bodies of a creature. Now, since the individual creature is a microcosmic representative of the vast and infinite macrocosm, these three states are relevant to the latter also. Their relationship is as follows—

Pure consciousness functioning ——— Pure consciousness functioning

at the individual creature's level——————————at the cosmic level

(a) Gross body/waker—'Vishwa'—— Total gross bodies—'Viraat'

(b)Subtle body/dreamer—'Taijas'——Total subtle bodies—'Hiranyagarbha'

(c) Causal body/deep sleeper —— Total causal bodies—'Ishwar'

——'Pragya'

Thus, the entire creation is visualised as a revelation of the cosmic ethereal sound represented by the divine word OM, and each letter of this word has been visualised as being representative of a particular state of

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existence of this creation. So when the full word OM is pronounced, these three letters obviously merge indistinguishably into one another to produce a wholesome sound represented by the word OM, symbolically merging the three states of existence into one composite whole. This composite whole is the same as the complete word OM.

This example is used to highlight how it is practically possible for a Yogi to merge the three states of his existence, which seemingly are independent of each other like these three individual letters A, U and M, into one another. Even as these three letters mean nothing in them selves if taken separately but acquire stupendous potentials when taken together, similarly these three states of existence of the creature have no substance and relevance for his spiritual peace and liberation as long as they are considered separately. It is only when their distinctiveness is removed by the means of Yoga the aspirant can hope to achieve total bliss and tranquility. Since peace, calmness, happiness, beatitude and felicity are the hallmarks of emancipation, once the creature removes artificial distinctions between the three types of his existence as well as between the world and the vast cosmos, he symbolically becomes liberated and delivered from the world even while he is alive and going about his chores in a routine manner.]

मकारमप्यात्मनि चिद्घने परे विलापयेत्प्राज्ञमपीह कारणम्।
सोऽहं परं ब्रह्म सदा विमुक्तिमद्विज्ञानदृङ्मुक्त उपाधितोऽमलः ।।51।।

makāramapyātmani cidghane pare
vilāpayetprājñamapīha kāraṇam /
so'haṃ paraṃ brahma sadā vimuktima-
dvijñānadṛṅmukta upādhito'malaḥ //

Then, one should ultimately coalesce the letter M representing Pragna, which is the causal body of the creature harbouring it's individual Atma or soul, with the cosmic causal body representing the supreme macrocosmic Ishwar who is also called the Parmatma or the transcendental Soul of the entire creation. The latter is a fountainhead and infinite treasury of consciousness.

Once this merger process is complete, one would realise that one is none other than but the supreme transcendental Brahm himself, that Brahm who is eternally and infinitely liberated, who is an embodiment, a fountainhead and treasure of infinite and truthful wisdom and enlightened erudition, who is without (beyond the purview of) any titles, honours, attributes, names, designations, qualities and virtues, and who is pristine pure, uncorrupt, undiluted and immaculate (51).

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[Note :—The word OM is a sound symbol representing the supreme reality called Brahm. Brahm is not an object that can be perceived by sense organs, nor can it be comprehended by the mind or a thought that can be reflected upon by the intellect using its discriminatory faculty. It is beyond human comprehension—i.e. it is unknown to humankind. To understand anything which is unknown, one has to proceed from the known factors. An unknown entity cannot be explained by using other unknown factors. Of all the factors known to man, the subtlest is sound. The realm of the 'known' world consists of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and space in progressive order of subtlety. Different permutations and combinations of these 5 elements constitute the entire realm of factors known to man, which is called the 'creation'.

Of the five elements, Space is the subtlest, and Sound is the essence of space. Sound is created only in space (for instance, the gap between our palms helps us to clap, but in a piece of wood, there is no space, hence no sound can be created). This sound is the subtlest because it can be perceived by only one sense organ, e.g. ear. It directly impinges on the mind and intellect apparatus. It is considered as the very first manifestation of the supreme truth since the un-manifest truth lies just beyond the manifested world. This being so, sound is the best and the subtlest vehicle to transport one from the 'terrestrial world of the known' to the 'transcendental world of the unknown'.

The question is why OM is selected out of all the sounds known to mankind to represent the supreme Brahm. The reason is that this single word represents the entire phenomenon of sound. It consists of three different and distinct sounds—viz. 'A' which is a throat sound, emanating from the root of the tongue; 'U' is created by rolling forward of the muscles of the tongue between the root and the lip of the mouth; and the letter 'M' is the concluding sound produced by closing of the lips. Hence all articulate sounds are aptly represented by the three letters A, U, M of the word OM. This word is a coordination of all that is indicative of life because only a living entity can speak, and not a dead entity.

OM represents, therefore, the supreme truth/reality which pervades the three states of consciousness—the waker (Viswa), the dreamer (Taijas) and the deep sleeper (Pragna) states of consciousness of the creature in the terrestrial realm of the 'known world' of the creation called microcosm as far as the creature is concerned. The same logic when extended to the cosmos results in OM representing the cosmic waker (Viraat), the cosmic dreamer (Hiranyagarbh) and cosmic deep sleeper (Iswara) aspect of macrocosm.

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The silence that follows the sounding of the word OM (i.e. after closure of the lips) is called 'AMTRA-OM'. This silence represents the forth state of consciousness called Turiya which is all blissful and a transcendental reality. Since sound emanates (A), expands/progresses (U) and collapses/merges (M) back into space—it naturally follows that space existed before the very advent of sound. Hence this fourth state of consciousness represents that 'Turiya state' or the pre-sound and post-sound state of all-pervading space. This silence is bliss, serenity, placidity and tranquility.

But the most astounding thing about the cosmic silence is that it is not inert and inane because it has the capacity to generate or create sound. And anything that 'creates' must have a life infusing capability. Taking a leaf from microbiology, a cell must have a nucleus so the space must also, logically, have a nucleus. This nucleus is the Atma or the soul of the cosmos or, in other words, the macrocosmic soul (Parmatma) of the cosmos which is the counterpart of the microcosmic soul (Atma) of the Jiva.

If there were no silence, we cannot hear the sound. It is the background of the silence which enables us to hear the sound in the first place. Therefore, the word symbol OM represents the entire gamut of manifest world of plurality as well as the un-manifest world of Reality. OM, the sound, represents the former (manifest) world while the silence represents the latter (un-manifest) world. When this all embracing, all-pervading, blissful internal cosmic silence is reached, the seeker becomes one with the Supreme Reality, a state of God or self realisation.

The principle by whose mere presence the intellect thinks, the mind feels, and the body perceives, is the 'Subject', the substratum for all the experiences of the body, mind, and intellect. This principle that lends its light to every being is the divine principle OM, or Atman (the Self), according to Vedanta.

It would be pertinent here to quote extracts from two Upanishads that define OM very succinctly. They are (a) Ram Tapiniopanishad, canto 3, verse no.5-9, and (b) Pranavo Panishad which has only 13 verses dedicated to OM.

(a) *Ram Tapiniopanishad*, canto 3, verse no.5-9—" The divine word OM is imperishable and immortal. The entire visible world is but a manifestation/revelation of that invisible divine entity. Whatever existed, whatever exists and whatever shall ever exist as well as any time-space dimension which is beyond these three are nothing else but a manifestation or an extension of OM. It encompasses all and is encompassed by all. [The word OM is the divine name referring to

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the entity called Parmatma, literally meaning the supreme Soul. It is the macrocosmic form of the microcosmic soul residing in the individual creature. Although the supreme Brahm is indivisible and cannot be fractioned, we hypothetically split his entire being into four stages or states of existence to fully understand or grasp his full form or nature.]

The supreme Soul represented by the word OM has so-called four states of existence— viz (a) The waking state of consciousness called 'Jagrat' (or Vishwa), (b) the dream state of consciousness called 'Swapna' (or Sukshama or Taijas), (c) the deep sleep state of consciousness called 'Pragna' and (d) the supreme blissful state of consciousness called 'pure Brahm' which is beyond the earlier three states of consciousness or existence. It is called the 'Turiya' state of consciousness. To begin with, the 1st state is described here :—During the waking state of consciousness, the entire manifest world is its (Brahm's) body. It is related to this gross world and is conscious of its existence through the seven constituent parts that constitutes this world such as Bhu (भूः), Bhuvaha (भुवः), Swaha (स्वः), Maha (महः), Janaha (जनः), Tapaha (तपः), Satyamaha (सत्यमः).

The soul perceives this world (or comes in contact with it and reacts with it) by its five organs of perception and five organs of action, the five Prans (the vital wind forces which control/regulate life) and four internal organs— totaling 19 in all. These are called the so-called 'Mouth' of the soul (because it is through them that the soul partakes of this world). The entity that enjoys and experiences this world is called the 'Viraat' at the macrocosmic level and 'Vishwa' at the microcosmic level. The body is called the 'gross body' of the creature. This is the 1st step to understand the supreme Soul called 'Parmeshwar' (or the supreme Lord) (5).

The 2nd state of existence of the creature is called the 'dreamer state' when the external stimuli cease to effect the mind but the inherent tendencies called 'Vasnaas' create an imaginary world of perceptions and actions which are together and compositely called 'a dream'. It is not gross like the 1st stage, and is called the subtle state of existence which is also called 'Taijas'. This Taijas is the microcosmic counterpart of the macrocosmic soul called 'Hirnayagarbh'. It has all the constituent parts of the 1st step or stage as described in the preceding verse but instead of being gross in the sense that it is in contact with the delusionary outside world, it is instead more subtle in nature being based on the mind and its capacity to imagine and fly (6).

The 'sleeping state' during which the person does not desire/wish to enjoy any of the objects of this materialistic world and is neither

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conscious of their existence, a state when he does not even dream of any imaginary non-existent world, such a state of existence is called the 'deep sleep state of consciousness'. The body which houses this state is called the casual body, and it corresponds to Parmatma in its microcosmic form called 'Pragna' which has its macrocosmic counterpart in the 'Eswar' (Ishwar).

This casual body encloses the soul which is surrounded by the bliss sheath. The soul is separated from the surrounding cosmos by these three imaginary veils or sheaths— the gross body (verse no. 5), the subtle body (verse no. 6) and the casual body (verse no. 7).

As soon as these are dissolved or removed, it (the soul) enjoys a state of merger with the cosmos— i.e., the only thing that separates the macrocosmic 'Viraat' from the microcosmic 'soul' is the bliss sheath. Therefore this 'Pragna' state is the 3rd leg or form of Parmatma (7).

The supreme Soul representing the soul of the creature is the Parmatma or the Lord of all that exists. He his omniscient and all pervading. He is the very cause of creation, its sustenance and its annihilation of the whole cosmos. He is wise, erudite, sagacious, enlightened and knowledgeable in every respect, but paradoxically not at the same time; he knows as well as is ignorant of anything; he has never been seen or observed, never been used and never been caught, grasped and comprehended by anyone; he has no attributes, qualities, virtues and characteristics; he is beyond the purview of thought, imagination, intellect and conception; he cannot be indicated or represented by any known signs, symbols or formulas; he is the only eternal, majestic, powerful, almighty and stupendously magnificent entity called the 'soul' or Atma which can be experienced and in which there is a total lack of deceit, conceit, fraud, deceptions, imposturing, falsehoods, delusions and artificiality. He is eternally blissful, calm, tranquil, serene and peaceful; he is auspicious as well as benevolent, magnanimous, munificent, kind and gracious. He is non-dual, without a second, immutable, indivisible and unique— such an entity is called the supreme transcendental Brahm by those who are wise, erudite, sagacious, enlightened and knowledgeable about the universal truth and absolute reality. This entity is the 4th state of consciousness, or the 4th leg/step to understand the Lord (8).

The true understanding of the Atma/soul of the creature is done with the advice and guidance given by erudite and enlightened teachers and ancient scriptures. It can be understood, comprehended and grasped only with the aid of an uncorrupt, unbiased and sharp intelligence, mind and discrimination faculty of the creature. This Atma/soul is self-luminous, enlightened and splendorous. It is devoid

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and free from any action or deed done at the behest of (or inspired by) ignorance (i.e., due to lack of wisdom, truthful knowledge and delusions). It has the ability, potential and prowess to eliminate the darkness of ignorance as well as its deluding and its incumbent shackling effect on the creature. It (Atma/soul) is eternally one, without a second, unique, non-dual, indivisible and an embodiment of supreme, absolute and universal bliss, happiness, peace and tranquility. It is the foundation and the resting place for all that exists; it is the only majesty and power. It does not have any trace of the darkness created by ignorance, delusion and worldly attachment of any kind. [Since the microcosmic soul residing inside the creature is like the nuclei of the atom, the former being the miniscule image or the counterpart of the macrocosmic soul of the universe called Parmatma who is represented by the divine word symbol OM, which in turn is synonymous with the seed/root word for Sri Ram, that is 'Rang'. Logically, therefore, the soul of the creature is the same as the supreme Brahm who is Lord Sri Ram.] Hence the seeker/aspirant must visualise that he is the same as Sri Ram, or there is no duality or difference between himself and the all-pervading and all-encompassing supreme Lord Sri Ram. This conclusion derived at by logical reasoning will inculcate the feeling in the seeker/aspirant that he posses all the characteristics, virtues, qualities and attributes associated with Sri Ram—such as possessing supreme bliss, peace, tranquility and serenity, eternal and unadulterated enlightenment, wisdom, knowledge, erudition and sagacity. It is this splendorous and dazzling light of enlightenment etc. which makes the soul self-illuminated, and supremely blissful and contented" (9).

(b) *Pranavo Panishad*—" Now we shall elucidate about and unravel the secret of the supreme knowledge of Brahm, the transcendental Lord who manifested himself as Lord Vishnu whose deeds are most strange, mysterious, stupendous and fascinating. This secret, sublime and subtle knowledge called 'Brahma Vidya' is so potent and powerful that it is able to incorporate 'fire' in its self (1).

Those who are expert and well-versed in the knowledge pertaining to Brahm have unanimously asserted and declared that the divine word OM is the imperishable Brahm (i.e., it is a synonym for Brahm). Its form, habitat and existence in all the 3 dimensions of time (past, present, future) are being discussed now (2).

In it (the divine word OM) are incorporated the Trinity Gods (Brahma, Vishnu and Shiva), the 3 Lokas (worlds— celestial, terrestrial and subterranean; it also means 'Bhu' भू— earth, 'Bhuvaha' भुवः—the sky, 'Swaha' स्वः—heaven), the 3 Vedas (Rig, Sam, Yajur), the 3 divine fires (गार्हपत्य—Garhapatya meaning the fire of the household hearth,

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दक्षिणाग्नि—Dakshinagni meaning the fire used as a witness to charities, आहवनीय—Ahavaniya meaning the fire of the fire-sacrifice), the 3 full syllables or letters (A, U, M), and the half syllable (the 'ॅ' Anuswar). This is the truthful, pure, auspicious and welfare providing form of Brahm (who is in the form of OM) (3).

The Rig Veda, the earth, the Garhapathya fire and Lord Brahma (the creator) —these entities are said to be incorporated and embodied in the first syllable/letter 'A' of the divine word OM representing Brahm, according to the definition and elucidation given by those who are well-versed in the knowledge pertaining to Brahm (4).

The Yajur Veda, the sky (of the solar system), the Dakshinagni fire and Lord Vishnu (the sustainer) —these are said to be incorporated and embodied in the 2nd syllable/letter 'U' of the divine word OM representing Brahm, and they impart great fame and majesty to it with their own divine glories (5).

The Sam Veda, the heavens (abode of Gods), the Ahavaniya fire and Lord Shiva (the annihilator) —these are said to be incorporated and embodied in the 3rd syllable/letter 'M' of the divine word OM representing Brahm, and lend their stupendous fame and majesty to its glory (6).

The radiant, bright and splendorous glare of the sky in the vicinity of the Sun is incorporated in the 1st syllable/letter 'A', while the glorious illumination of the sky in the vicinity of a full moon is established symbolically in (i.e., represented by) the 2nd syllable/letter 'U' which is present in the middle of the divine word OM (7).

The last (3rd) syllable/letter 'M' represents the divine 'fire' element; it is a fire without any smoke (i.e., it is a brightly lit fire) and is as dazzling, brilliant and splendorous as the electric. The 3 letters or syllables of OM (A, U, M) should be treated as embodying or personifying the combined glories of the Sun, the Moon and the Fire (8).

The light emanating from the wick of a burning lamp in which the flame is erect (vertical and burning brightly, without wavering) is equivalent to (or is incorporated in) the half-syllable 'Anuswar' (ॅ), which is like a dot above a concave dish, present on the top of the geometrical symbol or sign or emblem representing OM, i.e. 'ॐ' (9).

The wick of that flame which is symbolic of the 'Supreme Knowledge', which in turn is synonymous with Brahm, is like the stem of a lotus flower. It appears to pass through the nostrils right above into the head and shines there. [This is a metaphoric representation of the brain which has the subtle intellect in it. It is the intellect that

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illuminates and brightens the personality of a creature. It is the intellect that illuminates the world for the creatures and removes the darkness of ignorance, it is the intellect which makes the brain worth its value—because even animals have a brain but no intellect like that of a wise man—and which sets it apart from a man's brain in whom the light of knowledge is extinguished just like the value and utility of a lamp lies in the lighted wick and the light emanating from it and not the size, design or quality of material used to make the unlighted lamp.] (10)

That lighted wick (representing the half-syllable or 'Anuswar' present on the top of the symbol of OM which is —ॐ) infuses life and exercises control over the creature by the means of 72 thousand 'Naadis' (network of nerves and veins) spread across the body (11).

(The allegory of the chariot can be cited here— the 'Anuswar', sitting on the top, is the 'charioteer' because it is bright and illuminated like a wise and intelligent person who knows where to take the chariot while sitting astride it, the 'Naadis' are the 'reins', the various sense organs are like the 'horses', and the body is like the 'chariot' itself. The creature (the Atma which is his true and real form) is the 'passenger'.)

When a seeker/aspirant is just near attaining fulfillment of his aim of obtaining emancipation and salvation, he hears a resonating vibration like the sound emanating from a bell made of bronze when it is hit by a gong/hammer. This sound is that of OM (Pranav or Brahm) in its 'sound' form. All seekers aspire to hear it (12).

The seeker/aspirant who becomes engrossed in hearing that sound which represents the divine word OM, is said to or deemed to have acquired a stature which is equivalent to Brahm. He acquires the essence of bliss, beatitude, happiness and joy, called Amrit, which is the essential elixir of life, yearned for by those who are wise and enlightened. Verily, this is a certainty (13).]

एवं सदा जातपरात्मभावनः स्वानन्दतुष्टः परिविस्मृताखिलः।
आस्ते स नित्यात्मसुखप्रकाशकः साक्षाद्विमुक्तोऽचलवारिसिन्धुवत्।। 52।।

evaṃ sadā jātaparātmabhāvanaḥ
svānandatuṣṭaḥ parivismṛtākhilaḥ /
āste sa nityātmasukhaprakāśakaḥ
sākṣādvimukto'calavārisindhuvat //

In this way, the wise and realised Yogi (i.e. ascetic, the seeker, the one who meditates and contemplates upon the true self, the Atma), by constant practice and meditation upon the self as an image of the

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supreme Soul, becomes soaked, infused, drenched and intoxicated in profound bliss, peace and tranquility generated by remaining perpetually engrossed in this exercise of contemplation and meditation.

He becomes totally oblivious of the surrounding gross artificial world of material sense objects. Such a seeker who enjoys the bliss obtained by experiencing the truthful conscious nature of the self (Atma) becomes liberated from the shackles/fetters of this mundane life, and can be likened to a calm, serene, placid, tranquil and pacific ocean not disturbed by swirling whirlpools, huge waves and vicious storms generated by agitations in the ocean by natural and geo-physical factors (52).

एवं सदाभ्यस्तसमाधियोगिनो निवृत्तसर्वेन्द्रियगोचरस्य हि।
विनिर्जिताशेषरिपोरहं सदा दृश्यो भवेयं जितषड्गुणात्मनः।।53।।

evaṃ sadābhyastasamādhiyogino
nivṛttasarvendriyagocarasya hi /
vinirjitāśeṣariporahaṃ sadā
dṛśyo bhaveyaṃ jitaṣaḍguṇātmanaḥ //

Such a great and realised Yogi (ascetic) who regularly practices Samadhi[1], for whom the external objects pertaining to the five sense organs of perception[2] have become totally defunct and meaningless, completely extinct and annihilated, absolutely irrelevant and impertinent, who has vanquished all the enemies symbolized by such negative traits as anger, wrath and hate or worldly passions, lust, yearnings and ambitions etc., and who has conquered his 6 gross organs[3]—he is able to have regular communion with me; he can constantly witness and experience me; he can always see or visualise me (i.e. Sri Ram) in his heart (53).

[Note :—[1]The word Samadhi indicates the fourth state of consciousness called Turiya when the seeker/aspirant is in a trance like state of blissfulness, totally oblivious of the 5 gross sheaths surrounding him. In other words, he has transcended beyond the third stage of consciousness called the deep sleeper state. See also note to verse nos. 47-49 of this Canto as well as verse no. 53, Canto 1 of Lanka Kand.

[2]The five organs of perception are eyes, ears, nose, tongue and skin. The five perceptions that are related to them are sight, hearing, smell, taste and touch. All these organs are concerned with the perception of the external world of material objects because each of these senses has something or the other to do with the material objects of the world. Their

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activities and field of action are limited to a specific area—for example, the eyes can only see and cannot hear or feel; the ears can hear but cannot touch or see. Besides this limitation, none of these organs can perform their functions independently because, for one, they depend on the Pran or the vital life present in the body to remain alive and active, and second, they depend on the mind and intellect to make sense out of those objects that fall within their jurisdiction. On the other hand, the Atma is self sufficient, independent and consciousness personified; it does not depend on any other entity to make it worthwhile.

[3]The six gross organs referred above are—one 'objective mind' (i.e. the subtle body; the intermediary gross element between the intellect and the physical body) and the five organs of perception such as the eye, nose, skin, tongue and ears, bringing the total to six. The mind is included as an organ because the negative traits mentioned in this verse such as anger and passions originate in the mind and not the other physical organs.]

ध्यात्वैवमात्मानमहर्निशं मुनिस्तिष्ठेत्सदा मुक्तसमस्तबन्धनः।
प्रारब्धमश्नन्नभिमानवर्जितो मय्येव साक्षात्प्रविलीयते ततः॥ 54॥

dhyātvaivamātmānamaharniśaṃ muni-
stiṣṭhetsadā muktasamastabandhanaḥ /
prārabdhamaśnannabhimānavarjito
mayyeva sākṣātpravilīyate tataḥ //

A seeker hermit or sage should, in the above prescribed manner, constantly spend his time on contemplation and reflection upon his pure self called the Atma night and day. And while doing this, he should remain aloof (i.e. indifferent, unconcerned, uninterested, dispassionate, detached) from all the different worldly ties, relationships, obligations, compulsions and formalities etc. which are associated with this mundane, artificial and entrapping existence that act like fetters which shackle him. He should forsake his ego and pride of being the doer and feeler of anything (i.e. perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer personality), and stoically and with forbearance cope with and endure what comes his way as a result of his past deeds and their accumulated effects without getting either ruffled or rattled by them, or getting involved in them. The result of this is that at the end, he merges (coalesces) with me (54).

Note :—The reason for such a creature merging with the Lord is that he breaks free from the cycle of birth and death by getting over the twin hurdles of deeds and their resultant effects as well as unfulfilled desired—

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both of which are the prime cause of the creature taking a new birth again. Obviously, when the cycle is broken, he manages to slip free from its endless bondage and escapes to his original base with the supreme Lord.

आदौ च मध्ये च तथैव चान्ततो भवं विदित्वा भयशोककारणम्।
हित्वा समस्तं विधिवादचोदितं भजेत्स्वमात्मानमथाखिलात्मनाम्।। 55।।

ādau ca madhye ca tathaiva cāntato
bhavaṃ viditvā bhayaśokakāraṇam /
hitvā samastaṃ vidhivādacoditaṃ
bhajetsvamātmānamathākhilātmanām //

Recognising that the world—its beginning, currency and end—are all the cause of fear and sorrows of one kind or the other, the seeker should abandon all actions and deeds pertaining to this world notwithstanding that they are prescribed by the Vedas[1]. Instead of this, he should worship and honour the pure Atma (supreme, conscious transcendental soul) which is the same whether it is the one residing in his own bosom or in the bosom of other creatures. [That is, he should remove the sense of duality and regard all as being images of the supreme Brahm.] (55).

[Note :—[1]The reader should read this verse in coordination with verse nos. 7-10; 14-23, and 42-46. The meaning is clear. The intention here is not to deride or demean the Vedas and their canons but to highlight the fact that mere mechanically following the letters of the various scriptures and proclamations of the Vedas will be a futile effort, a waste of labour and time if we do not understand the basic object of those exercises and the basic spirit of those proclamations or axioms. If we call ourselves well versed in the scriptures and still treat others with hate or have so many negative traits such envy and jealousy, if we have pride and ego, if we cannot control our self in all respects, if we allow ourselves to hide our shortcomings behind the curtain of scriptural sanction, then we are only cheating ourselves besides defrauding others. Because when we quote the scriptures, then they should not be twisted and twirled to suit our vested interests. Though the scriptures prescribe doing of deeds, but at the same time they also emphasise not to get emotionally involved in them, not to have the sense of being the doer of those deeds, and to do them selflessly and as an offering to the fire sacrifice. Honestly, how many do deeds in this manner? Indeed, if the deeds are done in a properly sanctioned manner they would be liberating for one would then be serving the Lord by serving his creation. If that is true then one has no right over the fruits of those deeds, and neither should one feel dismayed and

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dejected at their failure or bad effects. To have such equanimity is very difficult if not impossible, and if one has indeed this high level of dispassion and erudition, then whether he does anything or not really does not matter. It is this that is meant by the scriptures when they sanction deeds.

Further, verse no.57 below says that a wise sage should treat this world as a misconception of the reality while he remains in this world, going about doing his chores in a routine manner.]

आत्मन्यभेदेन विभावयन्निदं भवत्यभेदेन मयात्मना तदा।
यथा जलं वारिनिधौ यथा पयः क्षीरे वियद्व्योम्न्यनिले यथानिलः ।। 56 ।।

ātmanyabhedena vibhāvayannidaṃ
bhavatyabhedena mayātmanā tadā /
yathā jalaṃ vārinidhau yathā payaḥ
kṣīre viyadvyomnyanile yathānilaḥ //

Even as water merges and becomes one with the ocean, milk becomes one and inseparable from another sample of milk, one substratum of the sky becomes indistinguishable from the rest of the sky, and air is indivisible and inseparable from wind, likewise the seeker/aspirant should consider the entire manifest world (the illusionary but true-appearing world) as being the manifest form and inseparable from (i.e. indistinguishable from) his own Atma (which is pure consciousness). [In other words, a wise man should perceive no difference between his 'self' and the rest of the world. He should regard all as a manifestation of the same Atma.]

By extension, since the microcosmic Atma is synonymous with the macrocosmic Parmatma, the supreme transcendental Soul, the creature gets permanently established in the fact that the whole world is nothing else but the revelation or manifestation of the Parmatma which is me (Sri Ram) (56).

[Note :—The note to verse no. 51 above, though explaining the concept of OM, also elucidates the concept of the terrestrial soul being one with the cosmic soul. Citing the example of OM and its constituent letters, it is established that the cosmic soul that pervades in the entire creation is one and the same. It further propounds that one should take a holistic view of the creation and the Atma, and this erudition if properly cultivated will help the creature establish oneness with the cosmic soul in the form of Lord Ram.]

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इत्थं यदीक्षेत हि लोकसंस्थितो जगन्मृषैवेति विभावयन्मुनिः।
निराकृतत्वाच्छ्रुतियुक्तिमानतो यथेन्दुभेदो दिशि दिग्भ्रमादयः।। 57।।

itthaṃ yadīkṣeta hi lokasaṃsthito
jaganmṛṣaiveti vibhāvayanmuniḥ /
nirākṛtatvācchrutiyuktimānato
yathendubhedo diśi digbhramādayaḥ //

The enlightened one who has to remain in this mundane world living the life destined for him and consequentially doing deeds and taking actions ascertained for him, should consider the world as false, illusionary and deceptive like a mirage. This world has innumerable hurdles, it has its share of grave handicaps, impediments and limitations which are vexing and confounding for the spirit according to the Srutis (Vedas), Yuktis (logic and reasoning) and Praman (proof and veracity). For example, the illusion created by waxing and waning of the moon appears to imply that the moon decreases and increases in shape and size, whereas this is not the case. Similarly, there is confusion regarding the various directions of the globe in the absence of the compass and without any proper guidance (57).

[Note :—The handicap and impediment referred to above relate to the basic tenets of the Vedas which clearly indicate what is true and what is false. The world does not pass the test established by the Vedas, and by extension, it does not stand the test of logic and cannot be either proved to be true or false conclusively by any logical, authentic proof or yardstick. So, in short, it is handicapped on account of sustainability—i.e. its existence cannot stand the rigors of irrefutable proof, unequivocal logic and universal laws as established by the Vedas.

The example of the moon shows that the ancient Vedantic philosophers were well versed in the science of astronomy. We all know that the moon does not change in physical shape or size, from the full to the new moon, from the dark to the full disc. It is the angle of the earth with respect to the moon that it appears to increase or diminish in shape from the crescent to a rounded disc. To believe that the moon changes itself in shape is absurd once we come to know the physics behind it.

Similarly, if we lose the compass, we are completely at sea and confounded about the four directions in absence of any other sign or landmark to identify a particular direction, say north or south, when we are lost in a desert. We might confuse the north for the south specially when the sun and the stars get obscured due to sand storms and the sand dunes keep shifting and changing their location, size and contours.

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So, this verse essentially means that a wise, erudite, intelligent and sagacious aspirant should not be confounded, confused or vexed by myriad of precepts, tenets, theories and proclamations by various sources which are oftentimes contradictory to each other. Instead, he should treat this entire surrounding world as deceptive and as illusive as a mirage, and concentrate on the ultimate truth or reality as laid down in this whole Canto called Ram Gita. The emphasis is on the realisation of the truth, on self-awareness, self-realisation and self-awakening more than anything else.]

यावन्न पश्येदखिलं मदात्मकं तावन्मदाराधनतत्परो भवेत्।
श्रद्धालुरत्यूर्जितभक्तिलक्षणो यस्तस्य दृश्योऽहमहर्निशं हृदि।।58।।

yāvanna paśyedakhilaṃ madātmakaṃ
tāvanmadārādhanatatparo bhavet /
śraddhāluratyūrjitabhaktilakṣaṇo
yastasya dṛśyo'hamaharniśaṃ hṛdi //

Till the time the whole world does not appear to be my image or my manifestation (i.e. till the moment the seeker has not raised his thought patterns and intellectual insight and vision to the plane where he has realised the supreme truth as described in the foregoing verses, and sees the supreme Lord, who is the real and absolute Truth, in all the animate as well as the inanimate world because of the simple reason that the Lord is all-pervading and omnipresent, or conversely, the world is the cosmic body of the Viraat Purush representing the cosmic gross body of the macrocosmic soul) in the intellectual eyes and mental vision of the seeker, he should continue to worship me (here, 'worship me' means trying to concentrate one's attention towards the pure Atma by the process described in the preceding verses) to the exclusion of all other things in this world. True and faithful seekers and believers who have firm conviction, faith and belief in me, and who are my ardent devotees, experience me (i.e. come in contact with, or face to face with me) inside their hearts regularly day and night (58).

रहस्यमेतच्छ्रुतिसारसङ्ग्रहं मया विनिश्चित्य तवोदितं प्रिय।
यस्त्वेतदालोचयतीह बुद्धिमान् स मुच्यते पातकराशिभिः क्षणात्।।59।।

rahasyametacchrutisārasaṅgrahaṃ
mayā viniścitya tavoditaṃ priya /
yastvetadālocayatīha buddhimān
sa mucyate pātakarāśibhiḥ kṣaṇāt //

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Oh dear (i.e. Laxman)! I have told you the essence and substance of all the proclamations made by the Vedas; it incorporates all the essence of their axioms and maxims, all their tenets and philosophies. Any wise and erudite person who reflects and contemplates upon the pristine wisdom contained in this Canto shall be immediately freed from all sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors and their negative and demeaning effects (59).

[Note :—Verse nos. 6-59 is the essence of Vedant. It is called 'Ram Gita' because it has come out from the mouth of the Supreme Lord Ram himself, and has been pronounced at the request of Laxman even as Krishna's Gita was pronounced on the request of Arjun. Read with all other gospels contained in this Adhyatma Ramayan (a list is to be found at the end of this book), it marks the highest citadel of spiritualism and metaphysics that has ever been propounded by anyone for the spiritual welfare of mankind. Though the terminology is tough and intricate, any student of Vedant will find it not beyond grasp or comprehension. We must note that Vedant is more practical and empirical than other schools of philosophy and thoughts. It is based on sure-fire tenets which indeed can yield results instead of being abstract debates and discussions. But the problem with it is that very few people understand it, not to speak of implementing it. But once invoked in life, it opens the so-called vast vista of spiritual opportunities even as modern science unfolds vast potentials for mankind. Even as the knowledge and unleashing of the energy of the atom cannot be a humdrum activity of a layman, for in the latter's hands and in unscrupulous hands it can be catastrophic, to say the least, the profound concepts enshrined in this Ram Gita has to be judiciously understood and implemented. The emphasis of Adhyatma Ramayan, and especially the various gospels, is on the true nature of the creature, self-realisation, self-awareness, self-improvement and self-awakening.]

भ्रातर्यदीदं परिदृश्यते जगन्मायैव सर्वं परिहृत्य चेतसा।
मद्भावनाभावितशुद्धमानसः सुखी भवानन्दमयो निरामयः॥60॥

bhrātaryadīdaṃ paridṛśyate jaga-
nmāyaiva sarvaṃ parihṛtya cetasā /
madbhāvanābhāvitaśuddhamānasaḥ
sukhī bhavānandamayo nirāmayaḥ //

Oh brother! Whatever manifest world that is visible is nothing else but consisting of Maya (i.e. it is like a mirage, delusionary and fake, like a shadow and most deceptive). Take it out (i.e. eject it) from your mind-intellect apparatus or from your sub-consciousness; do not pay any heed to it. Instead, you should focus your attention on me and my

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true form. This would make you happy and blissful, contented and tranquil. You would become cleansed and purified in your mind and heart, and be without any mental anguish, perplexities, confusions and consternations (60).

यः सेवते मामगुणं गुणात्परं ह्रदा कदा वा यदि वा गुणात्मकम्।
सोऽहं स्वपादाञ्जितरेणुभिः स्पृशन् पुनाति लोकत्रितयं यथा रविः।।61।।

yaḥ sevate māmaguṇaṃ guṇātparaṃ
hṛdā kadā vā yadi vā guṇātmakam /
so'haṃ svapādāñcitareṇubhiḥ spṛśan
punāti lokatritayaṃ yathā raviḥ //

Those persons who have sincere and steady devotion for and remain focused on me who am beyond the purview and reach of all Gunas (virtues, qualities, characteristics, attributes, qualifications, specialties and honours), and am Nirgun (formless, attributeless, without any name, honours, titles and limitations), are deemed to be equivalent to me.

Similarly, those who worship, adore and honour in my Sagun form (that has a physical form, has certain attributes, virtues, characteristics, honours and features) are also considered as being equivalent to me.

They become so exalted that they can purify and cleanse the whole world by the dust of their feet even as the Sun clears the darkness of the entire world and illuminates it by its mere appearance (61).

विज्ञानमेतदखिलं श्रुतिसारमेकं वेदान्तवेद्यचरणेन मयैव गीतम्।
यः श्रद्धया परिपठेद् गुरुभक्तियुक्तो मद्रूपमेति यदि मद्वचनेषु भक्तिः।।62।।

vijñānametadakhilaṃ śrutisāramekaṃ
vedāntavedyacaraṇena mayaiva gītam /
yaḥ śraddhayā paripaṭhed gurubhaktiyukto
madrūpameti yadi madvacaneṣu bhaktiḥ //

This unique, matchless, peerless and unparalleled knowledge, erudition and awakening, is the only and irrefutable essence (deduction, conclusion, substance, juice) of the Vedas and other scriptures. That is, it is the basic and fundamental tenet expounded by them. More importantly, this has been expounded (pronounced, proclaimed, declared, enunciated, promulgated and propagated) as a tenet and maxim by none but me who am the best expert in the

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knowledge of the Vedas and am the supreme divine holy Lord himself whose holy feet are sought after and worshipped by all. Any one who has firm faith, belief and conviction in his moral teacher and spiritual guide called a Guru, and reads/recites this Ram Gita with a firm conviction, unwavering faith and unflinching belief in my words, shall be considered equivalent to me in spiritual stature and sublime nature (62).

[Note :—Verse nos. 59-62 tell us the importance of this Canto called Ram Gita. The assertion in verse nos. 61-62 that such and such person shall become equivalent in spiritual stature to Sri Ram is just an extension of the precept and truth declared in verse nos. 51, 54, 56, because if A = B then naturally it follows that B = A.]

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Uttar Kand — Canto 6

[The Lav-Kush Kand]

Slaying of Demon Lavan; Arrival of Sage Valmiki in the Horse Sacrifice of Sri Ram along with Lav and Kush; Discourse to Kush

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

एकदा मुनयः सर्वे यमुनातीरवासिनः। आजग्मू राघवं द्रष्टुं भयाल्लवणरक्षसः॥ 1॥
कृत्वाग्रे तु मुनिश्रेष्ठं भार्गवं च्यवनं द्विजाः। असङ्ख्याताः समायाता रामादभयकाङ्क्षिणः॥2॥

śrīmahādeva uvāca

ekadā munayaḥ sarve yamunātīravāsinaḥ /
ājagmū rāghavaṃ draṣṭuṃ bhayāllavaṇarakṣasaḥ //
kṛtvāgre tu muniśreṣṭhaṃ bhārgavaṃ cyavanaṃ dvijāḥ /
asaṅkhyātāḥ samāyātā rāmādabhayakāṅkṣiṇaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! All the sages, hermits and seers living by the banks of river Yamuna became so terrified by the demon named Lavan that one day they decided to seek help of Sri Ram and visited him (1). Those countless sages made the most exalted sage Chyavan, the son of sage Bhrigu, as their leader and came seeking the blessings of fearlessness from Sri Ram (and his intervention on their behalf by seeking protection against the demon) (2).

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तान्पूजयित्वा परया भक्त्या रघुकुलोत्तमः। उवाच मधुरं वाक्यं हर्षयन्मुनिमण्डलम्।। 3।।
करवाणि मुनिश्रेष्ठाः किमागमनकारणम्। धन्योऽस्मि यदि यूयं मां प्रीत्या द्रष्टुमिहागताः।।4।।
दुष्करं चापि यत्कार्यं भवतां तत्करोम्यहम्। आज्ञापयन्तु मां भृत्यं ब्राह्मणा दैवतं हि मे।।5।।

tānpūjayitvā parayā bhaktyā raghukulottamaḥ /
uvāca madhuraṃ vākyaṃ harṣayanmunimaṇḍalam //
karavāṇi muniśreṣṭhāḥ kimāgamanakāraṇam /
dhanyo'smi yadi yūyaṃ māṃ prītyā draṣṭumihāgatāḥ //
duṣkaraṃ cāpi yatkāryaṃ bhavatāṃ tatkaromyaham /
ājñāpayantu māṃ bhṛtyaṃ brāhmaṇā daivataṃ hi me //

The most exalted in the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) warmly welcomed those sages by paying obeisance to them and said in a sweet and pleasant voice which gladdened their hearts (3), 'Oh the most exalted sages! What is the reason that you have all come here? I shall do whatever you order me. In case you have just come to pay a courtesy call (literally, to have an affectionate viewing or a chit-chat with me), then I am very lucky and fortunate (4).Whatever work you need me to do, no matter how difficult and formidable the task might be, I shall do it for you. Give me your orders, for Brahmins are my Lords (i.e. I respect them and honour them)' (5).

तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसा हृष्टश्च्यवनो वाक्यमब्रवीत्। मधुनामा महादैत्यः पुरा कृतयुगे प्रभो।। 6।।
आसीदतीव धर्मात्मा देवब्राह्मणपूजकः। तस्य तुष्टो महादेवो ददौ शूलमनुत्तमम्।। 7।।

tacchrutvā sahasā hṛṣṭaścyavano vākyamabravīt /
madhunāmā mahādaityaḥ purā kṛtayuge prabho //
āsīdatīva dharmātmā devabrāhmaṇapūjakaḥ /
tasya tuṣṭo mahādevo dadau śūlamanuttamam //

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, sage Chyavan became happy and said most delightedly, 'Oh Lord! In the previous era called Satyug, there was a great demon called Madhu (6) who was very righteous and devoted to Gods and Brahmins. Lord Shiva was so pleased with him that he gave him an excellent trident (as a gift) (7).

प्राह चानेन यं हंसि स तु भस्मीभविष्यति। रावणस्यानुजा भार्या तस्य कुम्भीनसी श्रुता।। 8।।
तस्यां तु लवणो नाम राक्षसो भीमविक्रमः। आसीद्दुरात्मा दुर्धर्षो देवब्राह्मणहिंसकः।।9।।

prāha cānena yaṃ haṃsi sa tu bhasmībhaviṣyati /
rāvaṇasyānujā bhāryā tasya kumbhīnasī śrutā //

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tasyāṃ tu lavaṇo nāma rākṣaso bhīmavikramaḥ /
āsīddurātmā durdharṣo devabrāhmaṇahiṃsakaḥ //

He granted the boon that whosoever is attacked by it shall be reduced to ashes. It is heard that Ravana's younger sister Kumbhinasi was his wife (8). Through her he begot a son named Lavan who was very valiant, valorous, evil minded, pervert, wicked, invincible, and a tormentor of Gods and Brahmins (9).

पीडितास्तेन राजेन्द्र वयं त्वां शरणं गताः । तच्छ्रुत्वा रघवोऽप्याह मा भीर्वो मुनिपुङ्गवाः ।। 10 ।।
लवणं नाशयिष्यामि गच्छन्तु विगतज्वराः । इत्युक्त्वा प्राह रामोऽपि भ्रातॄन् को वा हनिष्यति ।। 11 ।।
लवणं राक्षसं दद्याद् ब्राह्मणेभ्योऽभयं महत् । तच्छ्रुत्वा प्राञ्जलि प्राह भरतो राघवाय वै ।। 12 ।।

pīḍitāstena rājendra vayaṃ tvāṃ śaraṇaṃ gatāḥ /
tacchrutvā rāghavo'pyāha mā bhīrvo munipuṅgavāḥ //
lavaṇaṃ nāśayiṣyāmi gacchantu vigatajvarāḥ /
ityuktvā prāha rāmo'pi bhrātṝn ko vā haniṣyati //
lavaṇaṃ rākṣasaṃ dadyāt brāhmaṇebho'bhayaṃ mahat /
tacchrutvā prāñjaliḥ prāha bharato rāghavāya vai //

Oh King of kings! We have been so much tyrannised by him that we have come to seek refuge in your holy feet'.

Hearing this, Raghav (Sri Ram) said, 'Oh the most exalted sages! You should not fear any more (10). Be carefree and go back. I shall surely kill Lavan'.

Having assured the sages, Sri Ram consulted his brothers, 'Who amongst you shall kill (11) the demon Lavan and bestow fearlessness to the Brahmins?'

Hearing this, Bharat said to Raghav (Sri Ram) with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer (12)—

अहमेव हनिष्यामि देवाज्ञापय मां प्रभो । ततो रामं नमस्कृत्य शत्रुघ्नो वाक्यमब्रवीत् ।। 13 ।।
लक्ष्मणेन महत्कार्यं कृतं राघव संयुगे । नन्दिग्रामे महाबुद्धिर्भरतो दुःखमन्वभूत् ।। 14 ।।

ahameva haniṣyāmi devājñāpaya māṃ prabho /
tato rāmaṃ namaskṛtya śatrughno vākyamabravīt //
lakṣmaṇena mahatkāryaṃ kṛtaṃ rāghavasaṃyuge /
nandigrāme mahābuddhirbharato duḥkhamanvabhūt //

'Oh Lord! I shall kill Lavan. Please give me your formal order to do so'.

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Then Shatrughan bowed before Sri Ram and said pleasantly (13), 'Oh Raghav! Laxman had participated in the war (with Ravana) and has accomplished a great feat, while the great and most wise Bharat has suffered a lot while staying at Nandigram (during the fourteen year exile period, and doing severe penances and austerities) (14).

अहमेव गमिष्यामि लवणस्य वधाय च। त्वत्प्रसादाद्रघुश्रेष्ठ हन्यां तं राक्षसं युधि।। 15।।
तच्छ्रुत्वा स्वाङ्कमारोप्य शत्रुघ्नं शत्रुसूदनः। प्राहाद्यैवाभिषेक्ष्यामि मथुराराज्यकारणात्।। 16।।

ahameva gamiṣyāmi lavaṇasya vadhāya ca /
tvatprasādādraghuśreṣṭha hanyāṃ taṃ rākṣasaṃ yudhi //
tacchrutvā svāṅkamāropya śatrughnaṃ śatrusūdanaḥ /
prāhādyaivābhiṣekṣyāmi mathurārājyakāraṇāt //

Now, I shall indeed go to slay Lavan. [That is, please give me at least one opportunity to serve you; it should be my turn to serve now.] Oh the best among the Raghus (Sri Ram)! I will surely kill that demon in the battle by your grace' (15).

Hearing these words of Shatrughan who was the vanquisher of enemies, Sri Ram lifted him (Shatrughan) on to his lap (as a token of brotherly affection) and said to him, 'I shall anoint you on the throne of Mathura today itself' (16).

[Note :—Mathura was the capital of demon Lavan.]

आनाय्य च सुसम्भाराँल्लक्ष्मणेनाभिषेचने। अनिच्छन्तमपि स्नेहादभिषेकमकारयत्।। 17।।
दत्त्वा तस्मै शरं दिव्यं रामः शत्रुघ्नमब्रवीत्। अनेन जहि बाणेन लवणं लोककण्टकम्।। 18।।

ānāyya ca susambhārāṁllakṣamaṇenābhiṣecane /
anicchantama pi snehādabhiṣekamakārayat //
dattvā tasmai śaraṃ divyaṃ rāmaḥ śatrughnamabravīt /
anena jahi bāṇena lavaṇaṃ lokakaṇṭakam //

Saying this, he got Laxman to bring all the necessary paraphernalia and anointed Shatrughan on that throne though the latter was reluctant to accept it (17). Then he (Sri Ram) gave him a powerful and potent arrow and said, 'You shall kill Lavan who is like a thorn for the world with this arrow' (18).

स तु सम्पूज्य तच्छूलं गेहे गच्छति काननम्। भक्षणार्थं तु जन्तूनां नानाप्राणिवधाय च।। 19।।
स तु नायाति सदनं यावद्वनचरो भवेत्। तावदेव पुरद्वारि तिष्ठ त्वं धृतकार्मुकः।। 20।।

sa tu sampūjya tacchūlaṃ gehe gacchati kānanam /
bhakṣaṇārthaṃ tu jantūnāṃ nānāprāṇivadhāya ca //

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sa tu nāyāti sadanaṃ yāvadvanacaro bhavet /
tāvadeva puradvāri tiṣṭha tvaṃ dhṛtakārmukaḥ //

That savage demon worships that trident (see verse no.7) inside his palace and goes to the forest to kill and eat different creatures (19). Hence, when he has gone out to the forest for hunting and before he returns home, you should stand on alert at the gate of the city with your bow at the ready and stringed (20).

योत्स्यते स त्वया क्रुद्धस्तदा वध्यो भविष्यति। तं हत्वा लवणं क्रूरं तद्वनं मधुसंज्ञितम्।। 21।।
निवेश्य नगरं तत्र तिष्ठ त्वं मेऽनुशासनात्। अश्वानां पञ्चसाहस्रं रथानां च तदर्धकम्।। 22।।
गजानां षट् शतानीह पत्तीनामयुतत्रयम्। आगमिष्यति पश्चात्त्वमग्रे साधय राक्षसम्।। 23।।

yotsyate sa tvayā kruddhastadā vadhyo bhaviṣyati /
taṃ hatvā lavaṇaṃ krūraṃ tadvanaṃ madhusaṃjñitam //
niveśya nagaraṃ tatra tiṣṭha tvaṃ me'nuśāsanāt /
aśvānāṃ pañcasāhasraṃ rathānāṃ ca tadardhakam //
gajānāṃ ṣaṭ śatānīha pattināmayutatrayam /
āgamiṣyati pañcāttvamagre sādhaya rākṣasam //

When he returns from his hunting foray in the forest, he shall angrily clash with you. At that time, he shall die at your hands. Having killed that cruel Lavan, you should establish yourself and (build your capital) in his Madhuvan (literally, a forest of honey-combs, but here meaning the city established by Lavan's father Madhu). This is my order for you. You go there first and fix the demon alone, so as not to raise any alarm and suspicion in his mind, otherwise he may procure the trident from his palace and fight you with it. Then killing the demon would be a difficult and a complicated affair. Soon, five thousands horses, chariots half that number, six hundred elephants and thirty thousand foot soldiers shall follow you from behind (as reinforcement)' (21-23).

इत्युक्त्वा मूर्ध्न्यवघ्राय प्रेषयामास राघवः। शत्रुघ्नं मुनिभिः सार्धमाशीर्भिरभिनन्द्य च।। 24।।
शत्रुघ्नोऽपि तथा चक्रे यथा रामेण चोदितः। हत्वा मधुसुतं युद्धे मथुरामकरोत्पुरीम्।। 25।।

ityuktvā mūrdhnyavaghrāya preṣayāmāsa rāghavaḥ /
śatrughnaṃ munibhiḥ sārdhamāśīrbhirabhinandya ca //
śatrughno'pi tathā cakre yathā rāmeṇa coditaḥ /
hatvā madhusutaṃ yuddhe mathurāmakarotpurīm //

Saying this, Raghav (Sri Ram) smelt his head (as a token of affection

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like kissing a person on his cheeks), duly honoured and blessed him accompanied by other sages, and then dismissed him (i.e. told him to proceed on the mission) (24). Shatrughan did as was advised by Sri Ram. He killed the son of Madhu in the battle (duel) and established the kingdom of Mathura (25).

स्फीतां जनपदां चक्रे मथुरां दानमानतः। सीतापि सुषुवे पुत्रौ द्वौ वाल्मीकेरथाश्रमे।। 26।।
मुनिस्तयोर्नाम चक्रे कुशो ज्येष्ठोऽनुजो लवः। क्रमेण विद्यासम्पन्नौ सीतापुत्रौ बभूवतुः।।27।।

sphītāṃ janapadāṃ cakre mathurāṃ dānamānataḥ/
sītāpi suṣuve putrau dvau vālmīkerathāśrame//
munistayornāma cakre kuśo jyeṣṭho'nujo lavaḥ/
krameṇa vidyāsampannau sītāputrau babhūvatuḥ//

He satisfied all the people with his generous largesse, charities and alms as well as by giving them honours and respects of various kinds. He made Mathura into a prosperous city with contented citizens.

Meanwhile, Sita gave birth to two sons at the hermitage of sage Valmiki (26). The sage named the elder son Kush and the younger one was named Lav. In due course of time, these two sons of Sita became well educated (27).

उपनीतौ च मुनिना वेदाध्ययनतत्परौ। कृत्स्नं रामायणं प्राह काव्यं बालकयोर्मुनिः।। 28।।
शङ्करेण पुरा प्रोक्तं पार्वत्यै पुरहारिणा। वेदोपबृंहणार्थाय तावग्राहयत प्रभुः।। 29।।

upanitau ca muninā vedādhyayanatatparau/
kṛtsnaṃ rāmāyaṇaṃ prāha kāvyaṃ bālakayormuniḥ//
śaṅkareṇa purā proktaṃ pārvatyai purahāriṇā/
vedopabṛṃhanārthāya tāvagrāhayata prabhuḥ//

After their sacred-thread ceremony had been done by the sage (Valmiki), they began their formal education. Valmiki taught them the entire epic called Ramayan (28). In an ancient time, Lord Shankar (Shiva) who was the destroyer of the demon Tripura, had narrated it to his consort Parvati. The exalted sage taught it to them so that they are able to grasp the extensive philosophy contained in the Vedas (because those philosophies and tenets of the Vedas were condensed and crystalised and cleverly woven into the texture of the epic) (29).

[Note :—This verse shows that the nutshell of Vedic philosophy is contained in the Ramayan. To the reader of this epic, the complicated philosophical concepts, tenets and terminology of the Vedas and the

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Upanishads have been simplified and the essence or the juice extracted, and it is presented to the reader-cum-seeker on a platter, as it were, in the form of the divine story of Sri Ram. Everything is ready-made and pre-cooked so to say, and he is expected to just avoid the hassles of digging into voluminous treatises of the scriptures and instead grasp their essence contained in the text of Ramayan. The tenets have been carefully woven into the texture of the story so as to enable the seeker to relate to the precepts or tenets more closely in life-like situations and also to break free from the monotony of abstract, dry philosophical debates. With Lord Shiva as the narrator, Parvati as the audience and Veda Vyas as the scribe, what better deal can humankind ever expect for its spiritual endeavours.]

कुमारौ स्वरसम्पन्नौ सुन्दरावश्विनाविव। तन्त्रीतालसमायुक्तौ गायन्तौ चेरतुर्वने।।30।।
तत्र तत्र मुनीनां तौ समाजे सुररूपिणौ। गायन्तावभितो दृष्ट्वा विस्मिता मुनयोऽब्रुवन्।।31।।

kumārau svarasampannau sundarāvaśvināviva /
tantrītālasamāyuktau gāyantau ceraturvane //
tatra tatra munīnāṃ tau samāje surarūpiṇau /
gāyantāvabhito dṛṣṭvā vismitā munayo'bruvan //

Those two boys, who were as beautiful, attractive, charming, graceful and handsome as the Ashwini Kumars (the twin sons of the Sun God who are said to be the physicians of the Gods), sang the Ramayan to the accompaniment of music of the Veena (the stringed musical instrument; the Indian lute) and roamed about in the forest (30). Seeing those divine children with God-like auspicious and divine characteristics, the different sages, hermits, seers and ascetics in and around whose hermitages they roamed about singing the hymns of Ramayan, were very amused and full of amazement, and talked amongst themselves as follows (31).

गन्धर्वेष्विव किन्नरेषु भुवि वा देवेषु देवालये
पातालेष्वथवा चतुर्मुखगृहे लोकेषु सर्वेषु च।
अस्माभिश्चिरजीविभिश्चिरतरं दृष्ट्वा दिशः सर्वतो
नाज्ञायीदृशगीतवाद्यगरिमा नादर्शि नाश्रावि च।।32।।
एवं स्तुवद्भिरखिलैर्मुनिभिः प्रतिवासरम्। आसाते सुखमेकान्ते वाल्मीकेराश्रमे चिरम्।।33।।

gandharveṣviva kinnareṣu bhuvi vā deveṣu devālaye
pātāleṣvathavā caturmukhagṛhe lokeṣu sarveṣu ca /
asmābhiścirajīvibhiścirataraṃ dṛṣṭvā diśaḥ sarvato
nājñāyīdṛśagītavādyagarimā nādarśi nāśrāvi ca //

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evaṃ stuvadbhirakhilairmunibhiḥ prativāsaram /
āsāte sukhamekānte vālmīkerāśrame ciram //

'We, who have a long life and have been observing all the directions (corners) of the world closely, have not known, seen or heard anywhere such expertise in melodious singing and playing of musical instruments, even in the worlds frequented by the Gandharvas (celestial musicians) and the Kinnars (celestial dancers and singers), or in the terrestrial world, the heavens, the nether world, or even in Brahma's abode' (32).

In this way, the two boys lived happily for a long time in the hermitage of sage Valmiki, basking in the praises heaped on them daily by the different sages and hermits (33).

अथ रामेऽश्वमेधादींश्चकार बहुदक्षिणान्। यज्ञान् स्वर्णमयीं सीतां विधाय विपुलद्युतिः ।। 34 ।।
तस्मिन्विताने ऋषयः सर्वे राजर्षयस्तथा। ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः समाजग्मुर्दिदृक्षवः ।।35 ।।

atha rāme'śvamedhādīṃścakāra bahudakṣiṇān /
yajñān svarṇamayīṃ sītāṃ vidhāya vipuladyutiḥ //
tasminvitāne ṛṣayaḥ sarve rājarṣayastathā /
brāhmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ samājagmurdidṛkṣavaḥ //

Meanwhile, the most glorious and majestic Sri Ram performed many religious sacrifices, such as the horse sacrifice involving huge charities and alms-giving exercises. For this purpose, he had used a golden idol of Sita by his side in order to fulfill the religious requirement of a consort by the side to complete the sacrifices (34). In the present venue where the fire sacrifice was being performed, all the exalted sages, hermits, seers, ascetics, the different kings of the realm who lived a hermit-like life of dispassion and who were called the Raj Rishis, the Brahmins, the Kshatriyas, the Vaishyas etc.—all had come to participate in it and to enjoy the spectacle as spectators joining a great religious festival (35).

वाल्मीकिरपि सङ्गृह्य गायन्तौ तौ कुशीलवौ। जगाम ऋषिवाटस्य समीपं मुनिपुङ्गवः ।। 36 ।।
तत्रैकान्ते स्थितं शान्तं समाधिविरमे मुनिम्। कुशः पप्रच्छ वाल्मीकिं ज्ञानशास्त्रं कथान्तरे ।।37 ।।

vālmīkirapi saṅgṛhya gāyantau tau kuśīlavau /
jagāma ṛṣivāṭasya samīpaṃ munipuṅgavaḥ //
tatraikānte sthitaṃ śāntaṃ samādhivirame munim /
kuśaḥ papraccha vālmīkiṃ jñānaśāstraṃ kathāntare //

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The most exalted sage Valmiki also came there, accompanied by the duo Kush and Lav who had been singing the Ballads (of the epic Ramayan) most melodiously all the way to Ayodhya. He put up at the place designated (earmarked) for the lodging and boarding of sages and saints[1](36). There, one day when sage Valmiki had just got up after his regular meditation session and was seated in a most calm and relaxed manner in a lonely and peaceful place, Kush interrupted the narration of the divine story (i.e. he stopped the melodious recitation of the Ramayan) and asked the sage about 'Gyanshastra' (literally, the science of spiritual knowledge or metaphysics) (37).

[Note—[1]This shows that sage Valmiki had come to Ayodhya unannounced.]

कुश उवाच

भगवञ्छ्रोतुमिच्छामि संक्षेपाद्भवतोऽखिलम्। देहिनः संसृतिर्बन्धः कथमुत्पद्यते दृढः॥38॥
कथं विमुच्यते देही दृढबन्धाद्भवाभिधात्। वक्तुमर्हसि सर्वज्ञ मह्यं शिष्याय ते मुने॥39॥

bhagavañchrotumicchāmi saṅkṣepādbhavato'khilam /
dehinaḥ saṃsṛtirbandhaḥ kathamutpadyate dṛḍhaḥ //
kathaṃ vimucyate dehī dṛḍhabandhādbhavābhidhāt /
vaktumarhasi sarvajña mahyaṃ śiṣyāya te mune //

Kush asked—'Oh Lord! I wish to hear from you how the creature acquires this robust and unbreakable shackle in the shape of this mundane, delusory, entangling and artificial world consisting of the endless cycle of birth and death (38).

Then, how does it get freedom/liberation from this shackle? Oh respected sage! You are all knowing. Tell all the secrets and mysteries to me who have come to you seeking an answer and am most humbly begging you to throw light on this most intriguing and intricate question' (39).

वाल्मीकिरुवाच

शृणु वक्ष्यामि ते सर्वं संक्षेपाद्बन्धमोक्षयोः। स्वरूपं साधनं चापि मत्तः श्रुत्वा यथोदितम्॥40॥
तथैवाचर भद्रं ते जीवन्मुक्तो भविष्यसि। देह एव महागेहमदेहस्य चिदात्मनः॥41॥

vālmīkiruvāca

śṛṇu vakṣyāmi te sarvaṃ saṅkṣepādbandhamokṣayoḥ /
svarūpaṃ sādhanaṃ cāpi mattaḥ śrutvā yathoditam //

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tathaivācara bhadraṃ te jīvanmukto bhaviṣyasi /
deha . eva mahāgehamadehasya cidātmanaḥ //

Sage Valmiki said, 'Listen! I shall tell you in brief all the forms of shackles/fetters tying the creatures to the world and the ways to achieve emancipation and salvation through self-realisation. After listening carefully to what I says (40), you should act accordingly. This will give you all round welfare and you shall be freed from this illusionary, so-called worldly life. This gross physical body is the home of the body-less (i.e. formless and featureless, attributeless and characteristic-less), conscious and pure Atma (soul) (41).

तस्याहङ्कार एवास्मिन्मन्त्री तेनैव कल्पितः। देहगेहाभिमानं स्वं समारोप्य चिदात्मनि।। 42।।
तेन तादात्म्यमापन्नः स्वचेष्टितमशेषतः। विदधाति चिदानन्दे तद्वासितवपुः स्वयम्।। 43।।
तेन सङ्कल्पितो देही सङ्कल्पनिगडावृतः। पुत्रदारगृहादीनि सङ्कल्पयति चानिशम्।। 44।।

tasyāhaṅkāra evāsminmantrī tenaiva kalpitaḥ /
dehagehābhimānaṃ svaṃ samāropya cidātmani //
tena tādātmyamāpannaḥ svaceṣṭitamaśeṣataḥ /
vidadhāti cidānande tadvāsitavapuḥ svayam //
tena saṅkalpito dehī saṅkalpanigaḍāvṛtaḥ /
putradāragṛhādīni saṅkalpayati cāniśam //

The soul or Atma has made Ahankar (ego, pride, arrogance and haughtiness) his minister (advisor). This 'Ahankar' factor pertains to the body in which the Atma resides; the creature is proud of his body and its achievements, it is attached to the body and the things that are achievements of the body.

And since Ahankar is the advisor of the Atma or soul, it uses its closeness, influence and association with the latter to mislead it into believing that its (Atma's) real identity is not formless and pure consciousness but the inert and gross body because the body has given the creature its independent and individual identity. As a result, all the efforts done by the Ahankar through the medium of the body (both the gross as well as the subtle) appear to be done by the Atma because of this basic misconception and impersonation.

The Jiva or the living creature (i.e. the 'Atma or a soul with the body'), begins to be erroneously identified with the body. This living creature, who is under the dominance and spell of Ahankar, is inspired and impelled by it; it does what its advisor advices. As a result of

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which it gets tied by shackles/fetters representing various 'Sankalps' (resolves, solemn promises and vows, determinations; resolution to fulfill one's wishes, desires, volitions and ambitions) that he makes. As a consequence, he (the creature) spends his days and nights thinking about his sons, women, home etc. (because all these have been acquired by him with his body and he is 'proud' of his accomplishments and possessions. He does not want to let go of them because his 'ego' wouldn't let him do so; he clings to them and dies for them) (42-44).

सङ्कल्पयन्स्वयं देही परिशोचति सर्वदा। त्रयस्तस्याहमो देहा अधमोत्तममध्यमाः।। 45।।
तमः सत्त्वरजः संज्ञा जगतः कारणं स्थितेः। तमोरूपाद्धि सङ्कल्पान्नित्यं तामसचेष्टया।।46।।
अत्यन्तं तामसो भूत्वा कृमिकीटत्वमाप्नुयात्। सत्त्वरूपो हि सङ्कल्पो धर्मज्ञानपरायणः।।47।।

saṅkalpayansvayaṃ dehī pariśocati sarvadā/
trayastasyāhamo dehā adhamottamamadhyamāḥ//
tamaḥ sattvarajaḥ saṃjñā jagataḥ kāraṇaṃ sthiteḥ/
tamorūpāddhi saṅkalpānnityaṃ tāmasaceṣṭayā//
atyantaṃ tāmaso bhūtvā kṛmikīṭatvamāpnuyāt/
sattvarūpo hi saṅkalpo dharmajñānaparāyaṇaḥ//

Making vows and promises, showing determinations and having resolutions, dogged pursuit of and having yearnings to have desires fulfilled—all these result in setting into motion a cycle causing sorrows and anguish for the creature.

This Ahankar has three types of bodies, viz.—the best, the mediocre and the base, depending upon the type of Sankalp it makes. These Sankalps (see verse no.42-44) are of three types depending upon the three types of Gunas or qualities, characteristics and virtues called Satwa, Raj and Tam respectively that the creature has[1]. These three types of bodies are the causes that make the world exist in the form it does. [That is, the world is characterisd by the presence of these three Guans or characteristics in different permutations and combinations resulting in myriad variations in the nature, temperament, outlook, mental caliber etc. of the creature].

Out of these three, those creatures who have an excess proportion/ratio/share of the Tamas (most lowly) characters (i.e. those who have negative characters in far greater abundance or in a predominant proportion as compared to the other two characteristics) are engrossed in doing corresponding lowly and pervert deeds driven by these forces of character (46).

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As a result, the creature gets tainted by negative characteristics and submerged in negativity. The result is his entering a womb (or taking birth) in the form of insects and worms (representing the lowest rung in the evolutionary ladder which here represents the spiritual evolution of the creature).

Those who have the first and the most superior characteristic of Satwa as a predominant trait, pursue the path of righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct (called the path of Dharma), as well as inculcates wisdom and truthful knowledge (called Gyan) (47).

[Note—[1]The three types of characteristics are the inherent virtues and qualities present in a creature that determine its mental temperament and nature, and thereby its all round existence in the world. There are the following:—(a) Satwa—this corresponds to those positive virtues and qualities that are marked by creativity, purity, holiness and nobility; (b) Raj—these are medium in nature and correspond to such qualities as worldly passions, ambitions and desires; and (c) Tamas—these lowly virtues create dullness, inactiveness, indolence, inertia and perversions. Please refer to Uttar Kanda, canto 5, verse no.32-33.]

अदूरमोक्षसाम्राज्यः सुखरूपो हि तिष्ठति। रजोरूपो हि सङ्कल्पो लोके स व्यवहारवान्।। 48।।
परितिष्ठति संसारे पुत्रदारानुरञ्जितः। त्रिविधं तु परित्यज्य रूपमेतन्महामते।। 49।।
सङ्कल्पं परमाप्नोति पदमात्मपरिक्षये। दृष्टीः सर्वाः परित्यज्य नियम्य मनसा मनः।। 50।।

adūramokṣasāmrājyaḥ sukharūpo hi tiṣṭhati /
rajorūpo hi saṅkalpo loke sa vyavahāravān //
paritiṣṭhati saṃsāre putradārānurañjitaḥ /
trividhaṃ tu parityajya rūpametanmahāmate //
saṅkalpaṃ paramāpnoti padamātmaparikṣaye /
dṛṣṭīḥ sarvāḥ parityajya niyamya manasā manaḥ //

As a result, they live happily and contentedly in the realm of emancipation and salvation. [That is, they live a successful life as expected of a creature by the scriptures, and when they die, they get liberation from the fetters of this body and get deliverance.]

Those with Rajas characteristics in abundance remain attracted and tied to the world of women, son etc. (i.e. he becomes a worldly man).

Oh the wise and noble one! Those persons who forsake all the three types of Guna-induced actions and deeds in this world (i.e. they refrain themselves from pursuing any object in this world by the force of

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natural impulse, or are driven by the inherent tendency created by the above three Gunas), have their intellect and mind under their tight leash (control), and as a result, they obtain the most exalted state of oneness with the Parmatma who is the supreme transcendental Soul. Therefore you must leave aside worries and thoughts of all kinds, and instead endeavour to exercise control over your mind using the discriminatory powers of your of the intellect (i.e. through wisdom, erudition and truthful knowledge, you must overcome doubts and perplexities, and become tranquil and calm) (48-50).

सबाह्याभ्यन्तरार्थस्य सङ्कल्पस्य क्षयं कुरु। यदि वर्षसहस्राणि तपश्चरसि दारुणम्।। 51।।
पातालस्थस्य भूस्थस्य स्वर्गस्थस्यापि तेऽनघ। नान्यः कश्चिदुपायोऽस्ति सङ्कल्पोपशमादृते।।52।।

sabāhyābhyantarārthasya saṅkalpasya kṣayaṃ kuru/
yadi varṣasahasrāṇi tapaścarasi dāruṇam//
pātālasthasya bhūsthasya svargasthasyāpi te'nagha/
nānyaḥ kaścidupāyo'sti saṅkalpopaśamādṛte//

After you do so (as in verse no. 50) you must crush (vanquish or eliminate) all your desires and inclinations, both external (relating to the surrounding world) as well as internal (relating to the mind-intellect complex). Oh Anagh (i.e. the pure, sinless and faultless one)! Even if you do severe penances and austerities, and suffer hardships and adopt all possible means for thousands of years while staying anywhere, either in the subterranean world, the terrestrial world or the heavenly world, you do not have any other course (remedy, method or a way out) to break the fetter that shackles you to this world consisting of birth and death, except by destroying your inherent tendencies, inclinations, desires, yearnings, ambitions and false determinations (51-52).

अनाबाधेऽविकारे स्वे सुखे परमपावने। सङ्कल्पोपशमे यत्नं पौरुषेण परं कुरु।। 53।।
सङ्कल्पतन्तौ निखिला भावाः प्रोताः किलानघ।
छिन्ने तन्तौ न जानीमः क्व यान्ति विभवाः पराः।।54।।
निःसङ्कल्पो यथाप्राप्तव्यवहारपरो भव। क्षये सङ्कल्पजालस्य जीवो ब्रह्मत्वमाप्नुयात्।।55।।

anābādhe'vikāre sve sukhe paramapāvane/
saṅkalpopaśame yatnaṃ pauruṣeṇa paraṃ kuru//
saṅkalpatantau nikhilā bhāvāḥ protāḥ kilānagha/
chinne tantau na jānīmaḥ kva yānti vibhavāḥ parāḥ//

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niḥsaṅkalpo yathāprāptavyavahāraparo bhava /
kṣaye saṅkalpajālasya jīvo brahmatvamāpnuyāt //

Hence, you must diligently and sincerely strive to calm and conquer your desires and inclinations which will take you to a state of existence that is without sorrows and anguish, is faultless and untainted, is an embodiment/image of supreme bliss, peace, tranquility, serenity and happiness, and is most pure, holy and divine (53).

Oh Anagh! All the sense objects of this materialistic world are threaded together in the cord made up of desires, ambitions, yearnings, inclinations, determinations etc. As soon as the cord is snapped, one does not even become aware of these worldly acquisitions and fames which simply scatter away, and disintegrate and vanish from existence[1] (54). Hence, you must stop being confounded or being perturbed by what to and what not to do. Instead, just go on doing what comes your way as prescribed by destiny and your past deeds. As soon as the creature frees itself from this net/web of ambitions, yearnings, desires, determinations, vows and promises, it is able to acquire the exalted stature of Brahm[2] (55).

[Note :—[1]As soon as one stops worrying and pinning about the various objects of this world, stops yearning for them and getting frustrated when they are not acquired, or even if acquired he yearns for more, and instead, he just ignores them or forsakes them by industrious willful effort, they simply fail to attract and captivate his mind. This break in the so-called 'chain', spilling the objects and the need for them, helps to attain peace and tranquility in the mind, which in turn calms the agitated causal body surrounding the Atma. When these agitations subside, stability and tranquility is reached in the immediate vicinity of the soul, producing bliss.

[2]The creature is advised to be just a passive doer and not to get involved passionately in what it is doing. Just do it and forget about it. But one should be careful not to use this as an excuse for reckless behaviour or indolence. The one overriding leash is the factor of 'discrimination between righteous and unrighteous' way of doing anything. This will be determined by the various Vrittis or inherent tendencies as well as the ego or the various Gunas/characteristics of the creature. Here in comes the benefit of wisdom, truthful knowledge and self study which directs, channelises and aids the intellect to pick and choose between the good and the bad.]

अधिगतपरमार्थतामुपेत्य प्रसभमपास्य विकल्पजालमुच्चैः।
अधिगमय पदं तदद्वितीयं विततसुखाय सुषुप्तचित्तवृत्तिः ॥ 56 ॥

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adhigataparamārthatāmupetya prasabhamapāsya vikalpajālamuccaiḥ /
adhigamaya padaṃ tadadvitīyaṃ vitatasukhāya suṣuptacittavṛttiḥ //

Becoming well versed and enlightened in spiritual knowledge and wisdom, you must willfully abandon the entire entangling net/web of doubts, confusions, dilemmas, perplexities and consternations. You must endeavour to attain supreme bliss, peace and tranquility by annihilating and catheterizing all the inherent tendencies and inclinations of your mind-intellect complex that are the cause of all vexations and agitations for the creature. This way, you can obtain the supreme state of existence which is matchless and without a parallel (56).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 38-56 can be called the Gospel of Valmiki as told to Kush. This gospel should be read in conjunction with Canto 5 which is called Ram Gita. These two are complimentary to each other. (ii) The 3 characteristics referred to in verse nos. 45-50 are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the Vasanas and Vrittis inherent and integral to a creature. They surround the creature's soul as a covering or veil so much so that the original character of the Atma is completely obliterated and a new identity emerges which is at odds with the original.

So, sage Valmiki essentials tells Kush in verse nos. 50-54 to delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the Atma or soul to shine through.

It is like removing the various veils from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.]

***

Uttar Kand — Canto 7

Lav and Kush's rendition of Ramayan; Sita's entry into the earth; Sri Ram's gospel for his mother

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

वाल्मीकिना बोधितोऽसौ कुशः सद्योगतभ्रमः। अन्तर्मुक्तो बहिः सर्वमनुकुर्वंश्चचार सः ।।1।।
वाल्मीकिरपि तौ प्राह सीतापुत्रौ महाधियौ। तत्र तत्र च गायन्तौ पुरे वीथिषु सर्वतः ।।2।।
रामस्याग्रे प्रगायेतं शुश्रूषुर्यदि राघवः। न ग्राह्यं वै युवाभ्यां तद्यदि किञ्चित्प्रदास्यति ।।3।।

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śrīmahādeva uvāca

vālmīkinā bodhito'sau kuśaḥ sadyogatabhramaḥ /
antarmukto bahiḥ sarvamanukurvaṃścacāra saḥ //
vālmīkirapi tau prāha sītāputrau mahādhiyau /
tatra tatra ca gāyantau pure vīthiṣu sarvataḥ //
rāmasyāgre pragāyetaṃ śuśrūṣuryadi rāghavaḥ /
na grāhyaṃ vai yuvābhyāṃ tadyadi kiñcitpradāsyati //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! The effects of Valmiki's discourse to Kush was so profound that all his delusions, consternations, confusions, dilemmas and doubts were dispelled (i.e. were removed, eliminated and catheterised). He became immediately free from all internal fetters while continuing to do his usual worldly chores/duties externally. He roamed gracefully in this world like a liberated soul (1).

Soon thereafter, Valmiki said to those two sons of Sita, 'Both of you go to the city (Ayodhya) and move around its lanes and streets singing the Ballads (i.e. the epic Ramayan that I have taught you) (2). If Raghav, Sri Ram, wants to hear it, sing in front of him also. But if he attempts to give you something as a reward, do not accept it' (3).

[Note :—This is clear evidence that Sri Ram was unaware that sage Valmiki, Sita, Lav and Kush, his sons, have come to Ayodhya.]

इति तौ चोदितौ तत्र गायमानौ विचेरतुः। यथोक्तमृषिणा पूर्वं तत्र तत्राभ्यगायताम्।। 4 ।।
तां स शुश्राव काकुत्स्थः पूर्वचर्यां ततस्ततः। अपूर्वपाठजातिं च गेयेन समभिप्लुताम्।। 5 ।।
बालयो राघवः श्रुत्वा कौतूहलमुपेयिवान्। अथ कर्मान्तरे राजा समाहूय महामुनीन्।। 6 ।।
राज्ञश्चैव नरव्याघ्रः पण्डितांश्चैव नैगमान्। पौराणिकान् शब्दविदो ये च वृद्धा द्विजातयः।। 7 ।।

iti tau coditau tatra gāyamānau viceratuḥ /
yathoktamṛṣiṇā pūrvaṃ tatra tatrābhyagāyatām //
tāṃ sa suśrāva kākutsthaḥ pūrvacaryāṃ tatastataḥ /
apūrvapāṭhajātiṃ ca geyena samabhiplutām //
bālayoḥ rāghavaḥ śrutvā kautūhalamupeyivān /
atha karmāntare rājā samāhūya mahāmunīm //
rājñaścaiva naravyāghraḥ paṇḍitāṃścaiva naigamān /
paurāṇikān śabdavido ye ca vṛddhā dvijātayaḥ //

On the instructions of the sage, the two children roamed about gracefully and in a dignified manner singing the hymns of Ramayan.

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They first sang at all the places where the sage had told them (i.e. all the streets and alleys of the city) (4). By and by, the son in the clan of Kukustha (i.e. Sri Ram) heard about someone singing the story of his past days. When he heard that the style and lyrics of the Ballads being sung by the two boys were most heart stirring, sublime in their rendering and stupendous in their novelty, beauty, melody and expression (5), he was wonderstruck and became eager and curious to hear them. So, when there was a recess during the rituals associated with the horse sacrifice, Sri Ram—who was a lion amongst the kings—summoned all the great sages, hermits, seers, monks and ascetics, the kings, the Pundits (expert Brahmins) who were experts in the scriptures, in the Purans as well as in grammar, besides the elderly and other compatriots to the assembly forthwith (6-7).

[Note :—Verse no. 6 indicates the time of meeting of Sri Ram and Lav/ Kush was probably afternoon recess during the horse sacrifice.]

एतान्सर्वान्समाहूय गायको समवेशयत्। ते सर्वे हृष्टमनसो राजानो ब्राह्मणादयः।। 8।।
रामं तौ दारकौ दृष्ट्वा विस्मिताः ह्यनिमेषणाः। अवोचन् सर्व एवैते परस्परमथागताः।। 9।।

etānsarvānsamāhūya gāyakau samaveśayat /
te sarve hṛṣṭamanaso rājāno brahmaṇādayaḥ //
rāmaṃ tau dārakau dṛṣṭvā vismitāḥ hyanimeṣaṇāḥ /
avocan sarva evaite parasparamathāgatāḥ //

When all those who had been summoned gathered in the assembly, he (Sri Ram) called the boys who were singing the melodious Ballads. All those delighted kings and Brahmins (8) were taken aback, dumbfounded and extremely astonished when they saw Sri Ram and the two children together (because there was a striking resemblance between them). They stared dazed at them without even batting an eye-lid. They said amongst themselves (9)—

इमौ रामस्य सदृशौ बिम्बाद्बिम्बमिवोदितौ। जटिलौ यदि न स्यातां न च वल्कलधारिणौ।। 10।।
विशेषं नाधिगच्छामो राघवस्यानयोस्तदा। एवं संवदतां तेषां विस्मितानां परस्परम्।। 11।।
उपचक्रमतुर्गातुं तावुभौ मुनिदारकौ। ततः प्रवृत्तं मधुरं गान्धर्वमतिमानुषम्।। 12।।

imau rāmasya sadṛśau bimbādbimbamivoditau /
jaṭilau yadi na syātāṃ na ca valkaladhāriṇau //
viśeṣaṃ nādhigacchāmo rāghavasyānayostadā /
evaṃ saṃvadatāṃ teṣāṃ vismitānāṃ parasparam //

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upacakramaturgātuṃ tāvubhau munirādakau /
tataḥ pravṛttaṃ madhuraṃ gāndharvamatimānuṣam //

'These two (Lav and Kush) appear like a true reflection or a perfect image created out of the principal source (i.e. they are an exact replica of the original, which in this case is Sri Ram). That is to say, they are a perfect copy of Sri Ram. If they hadn't had matted hairs and had not been wearing garments of birch (as worn by hermits), there would have been no difference between them and Raghav (Sri Ram)'.

During the course of these animated discussions held in utter astonishment and wonder, those two hermit-princes prepared themselves to sing. Soon, there was a graceful, elegant, melodious and lyrical singing in the assembly which was very enchanting, mesmerising and sweet, unparalleled and spellbinding, and resembled the music and songs sung by Gandharvas (celestial musicians). [That is, it appeared that Gandharvas had assumed a human body in the form of Lav and Kush to sing the lyrical hymns of Ramayan in a most melodious, graceful and magnificently enchanting manner.] (10-12).

श्रुत्वा तन्मधुरं गीतमपराह्णे रघूत्तमः। उवाच भरतं चाभ्यां दीयतामयुतं वसु।। 13।।
दीयमानं सुवर्णं तु न तज्जगृहतुस्तदा। किमनेन सुवर्णेन राजन्नो वन्यभोजनौ।। 14।।
इति सन्त्यज्य सन्दत्तं जग्मतुर्मुनिसन्निधिम्। एवं श्रुत्वा तु चरितं रामः स्वस्यैव विस्मितः।। 15।।

śrutvā tanmadhuraṃ gītamaparāhṇe raghūttamaḥ /
uvāca bharataṃ cābhyāṃ dīyatāmayutaṃ vasu //
dīyamānaṃ suvarṇaṃ tu na tajjagṛhatustadā /
kimanena suvarṇena rājanno vanyabhojanau //
iti santyajya sandattaṃ jagmaturmunisannidhim /
evaṃ śrutvā tu caritaṃ rāmaḥ svasyaiva vismitaḥ //

Hearing that sweet and melodious song, the most exalted of the Raghu's clan (Sri Ram) said to Bharat during the evening hours, 'Give the children 10 thousand gold coins' (13). But those boys did not accept that gold. They said gracefully, 'Oh king! We survive on the fruits, edible roots and stems produced in the forest; what shall we do with this wealth?' Saying so and leaving aside that gold, they came back to where sage Valmiki was. Meanwhile, Sri Ram was awestruck, dumbfounded, astonished and most confounded on hearing about his own life story (because he had least expected it to hear being sung in such a subtle and sublime manner from the mouth of two young boys) (14-15).

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ज्ञात्वा सीताकुमारौ तौ शत्रुघ्नं चेदमब्रवीत्। हनूमन्तं सुषेणं च विभीषणमथाङ्गदम्।। 16।।
भगवन्तं महात्मानं वाल्मीकिं मुनिसत्तमम्। आनयध्वं मुनिवरं ससीतं देवसम्मितम्।। 17।।

jñātvā sītākumārau tau śatrughnaṃ cedamabravīt /
hanūmantaṃ suṣeṇaṃ ca vibhīṣaṇamathāṅgadam //
bhagavantaṃ mahātmānaṃ vālmīkiṃ munisattamam /
ānayadhvaṃ munivaraṃ sasītaṃ devasammitam //

He (Sri Ram) realised that the boys were none other than Sita's sons. He said to Shatrughan, Hanuman, Sushen, Vibhishan and Angad etc. (16), 'Bring sage Valmiki—who is God-like, and a great, noble and exalted soul, most senior and best amongst the sages and is as venerable as the Gods themselves— here along with Sita (17).

अस्यास्तु पर्षदो मध्ये प्रत्ययं जनकात्मजा। करोतु शपथं सर्वे जानन्तु गतकल्मषाम्।। 18।।
सीतां तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा गताः सर्वेऽतिविस्मिताः। ऊचुर्यथोक्तं रामेण वाल्मीकिं रामपार्षदाः।।19।।

asyāstu parṣado madhye pratyayaṃ janakātmajā /
karotu śapathaṃ sarve jānantu gatakalmaṣām //
sītāṃ tadvacanaṃ śrutvā gatāḥ sarve'tivismitāḥ /
ūcuryathoktaṃ rāmeṇa vālmīkiṃ rāmapārṣadāḥ //

Let Janki, the daughter of Janak (Sita) declare under a solemn oath in front of everyone so that all know that she is innocent and without any blemish/scar/taint to her character'.

Hearing those words of Sri Ram, all the messengers were dumbstruck with astonishment. But they carried out his orders nevertheless, and went to sage Valmiki and conveyed the whole message to him (18-19).

[Note :—(i) The wordings are very careful. Sri Ram has cleverly and diplomatically avoided asking Sita to convince him that she was innocent, for he knew that she was indeed immaculate. Sri Ram has merely asked her to say under oath something which he knew to be a fact but others were unaware of. He did not specifically ask her to say any specific set of words; that was to be her own decision what to say. His words in verse no. 18 and 34-37 below are very clear indication of the fact that she was innocent but let the others know, under oath, that she is innocent! Further, the fact that the messengers were extremely perplexed and astonished at this demand from Sri Ram also proves the fact of her innocence, because unlike the foolish, mentally depraved and pervert people of Ayodhya who were suspecting Sita's integrity, they were witness to the fire testing episode on the battle field of Lanka prior to the departure for Ayodhya

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as is clear from Lanka Kand, Canto 12, verse nos. 74-83, and Canto 13, verse nos. 19-20. So this is the reason why they were extremely dumbfounded.

(ii) We have learnt that Hanuman had gone to the Himalayas for meditation and doing Tapa in Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse no. 17. So his mention here as well as that of Vibhishan, Angad, Sushen etc. who had also been sent back to their native places by Sri Ram in Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse nos. 21-25, shows that all of them were invited to attend the horse sacrifice by Sri Ram.]

रामस्य हृद्गतं सर्वं ज्ञात्वा वाल्मीकिरब्रवीत्। श्वः करिष्यति वै सीता शपथं जनसंसदि।। 20।।
योषितां परमं दैवं पतिरेव न संशयः। तच्छ्रुत्वा सहसा गत्वा सर्वे प्रोचुर्मुनेर्वचः।। 21।।
राघवस्यापि रामोऽपि श्रुत्वा मुनिवचस्तथा। राजानो मुनयः सर्वे शृणुध्वमिति चाब्रवीत्।। 22।।
सीतायाः शपथं लोका विजानन्तु शुभाशुभम्। इत्युक्ता राघवेणाथ लोकाः सर्वे दिदृक्षवः।। 23।।
ब्राह्मणाः क्षत्रिया वैश्याः शूद्राश्चैव महर्षयः। वानराश्च समाजग्मुः कौतूहलसमन्विताः।। 24।।

rāmasya hṛdgataṃ sarvaṃ jñātvā vālmīkirabravīt /
śvaḥ kariṣyati vai sītā śapathaṃ janasaṃsadi //
yoṣitāṃ paramaṃ daivaṃ patireva na saṃśayaḥ /
tacchrutvā sahasā gatvā sarve procurmunervacaḥ //
rāghavasyāpi rāmo'pi śrutvā munivacastathā /
rājāno munayaḥ sarve śṛṇudhvamiti cābravīt //
sītāyāṃ śapathaṃ lokā vijānantu subhāśubham /
ityuktā rāghaveṇātha lokāḥ sarve didṛkṣavaḥ //
brahmaṇāḥ kṣatriyā vaiśyāḥ śūdrāścaiva maharṣayaḥ /
vānarāśca samājagmuḥ kautūhalasamanvitāḥ //

Valmiki, who had deep insight and foresight, came to realise the hidden intention of Sri Ram behind calling him and Sita to the royal court. So he replied, 'Sita shall take an oath in the public assembly tomorrow (20). There is no doubt about it. For a woman, her husband is the most superior Lord, almost God-like'.

Hearing these words of the sage, all of them (the messengers) went back and conveyed the news to Raghav (Sri Ram). Then, on hearing the message of the sage, the king (Sri Ram) said (21-22), 'Oh the assembled kings and sages! All of you must listen to the words of Sita said under oath in full public view and decide on the veracity of the facts whether what she says is true or false'.

On these instructions of Raghav (Sri Ram), all those who were present there—the Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, Shudras, the great

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sages and the monkeys (of Sugriv)—assembled there (in the court the next morning) out of curiosity and wonder to witness the unprecedented spectacle (23-24).

[Note—Verse no. 13 indicates that it was during the evening hours that Sri Ram had tried to reward Kush and Lav for their rendering of the epic story of Ramayan. Then he had summoned the messengers to invite sage Valmiki with Sita. Their going to the sage Valmiki and coming back, the royal proclamation for all the citizens to assemble and other nitty-gritty must have taken another couple of hours. Quite logically, therefore, Sita's oath-taking and the subsequent events must have occurred the next day because such events of so great an import are usually done during day time in the witness of the sun, and not during the night time. Hence, I have drawn the conclusion that the grand spectacle of Sita making the stern vow and entering the bowls of the earth took place the 'next morning of the day when Kush and Lav had rendered the Ramayan in the court of Sri Ram'.]

ततो मुनिवरस्तूर्णं ससीतः समुपागमत्। अग्रतस्तमृषिं कृत्वायान्ती किञ्चिदवाङ्मुखी ।। 25 ।।
कृताञ्जलिर्बाष्पकण्ठा सीता यज्ञं विवेश तम्। दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मीमिवायान्तीं ब्रह्माणमनुयायिनीम् ।। 26 ।।
वाल्मीकेः पृष्ठतः सीतां साधुवादो महानभूत्। तदा मध्ये जनौघस्य प्रविश्य मुनिपुङ्गवः ।। 27 ।।

tato munivarastūrṇaṃ sasītaḥ samupāgamat /
agratastamṛṣiṃ kṛtvāyāntī kiñcidavāṅmukhī //
kṛtāñjalirbāṣpakaṇṭhā sītā yajñaṃ viveśa tam /
dṛṣṭvā lakṣmīmivāyāntīṃ brahmāṇamanuyāyinīm //
vālmīkeḥ pṛṣṭhataḥ sītāṃ sādhuvādo mahānabhūt /
tadā madhye janaughasya praviśya munipuṅgavaḥ //

At that point of time, the exalted sage Valmiki too came along with Sita. She followed behind Valmiki from with a bowed head, hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and humility, and with an emotionally chocked throat, as they entered the venue of the sacrifice. The sight of Sita coming behind Valmiki resembled the divine and glorious view of goddess Laxmi following the creator Brahma. This divine and stupendously graceful and dignified spectacle resulted in a spontaneous chorus of applause of 'how graceful, how divine, how saintly' amongst the assembled masses. The most exalted sage (Valmiki) entered the gathering amidst a thunderous and resounding applause (25-27).

सीतासहायो वाल्मीकिरिति प्राह च राघवम्। इयं दाशरथे सीता सुव्रता धर्मचारिणी ।। 28 ।।
अपापा ते पुरा त्यक्ता ममाश्रमसमीपतः। लोकापवादभीतेन त्वया राम महावने ।। 29 ।।

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sītāsahāyo vālmīkiriti prāha ca rāghavam /
iyaṃ dāśarathe sītā suvratā dharmacāriṇī //
apāpā te purā tyaktā mamāśramasamīpataḥ /
lokāpavādabhītena tvayā rāma mahāvane //

He was accompanied by Sita walking gracefully and with dignity behind him. He addressed Raghav (Sri Ram, saying, 'Oh the son of Dashrath! You had abandoned this lady Sita—who is loyal and devoted towards her husband, most chaste, most righteous (28), and most pure and immaculately sinless—sometimes back near my hermitage in the dense and terrible forest fearing censor from the public and fear of ignominy (29).

प्रत्ययं दास्यते सीता तदनुज्ञातुमर्हसि। इमौ तु सीतातनयाविमौ यमलजातकौ।। 30।।
सुतौ तु तव दुर्धर्षौ तथ्यमेतद्ब्रवीमि ते। प्रचेतसोऽहं दशमः पुत्रो रघुकुलोद्वह।। 31।।

pratyayaṃ dāsyate sītā tadanujñātumarhasi /
imau tu sītātanayāvimau yamalajātakau //
sutau tu tava durdharṣau tathyametadbravīmi te /
pracetaso'haṃ daśamaḥ putro raghukulodvaha //

Now Sita wants to establish her immaculate credentials, so give her your permission. These two (Lav and Kush) are the sons of Sita who were born together (i.e. are twins) (30). I tell you the truth—these two graceful, majestic, invincible, brave, strong and formidable warriors are indeed your own sons. Oh the most exalted Raghav! I am the tenth son of Prajapati Pracheta (31).

अनृतं न स्मराम्युक्तं तथेमौ तव पुत्रकौ। बहून्वर्षगणान् सम्यक्तपश्चर्या मया कृता।। 32।।
नोपाश्नीयां फलं तस्या दुष्टेयं यदि मैथिली। वाल्मीकिनैवमुक्तस्तु राघवः प्रत्यभाषत।। 33।।

anṛtaṃ na smarāmyuktaṃ tathemau tava putrakau /
bahūnvarṣagaṇān samyaktapaścaryā mayā kṛtā //
nopāśnīyāṃ phalaṃ tasyā duṣṭeyaṃ yadi maithilī /
vālmīkinaivamuktastu rāghavaḥ pratyabhāṣata //

I do not remember that I have ever spoken a lie. It is none else but me who am telling you that these two children are indeed your sons. I have done severe penances for many years (32). If there is even an iota (i.e. even a speck or minutest spot) of blemish, taint or scar on the integrity, honesty and character of Maithili (Sita), then I shall not benefit from any of my penances. [That is, if I am telling a lie and Sita

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is not sinless, let me suffer from the sin of lying under oath and let all the rewards of my penances and austerities go in vain.]' When sage Valmiki had made this stern and solemn vow in public, Raghav (Sri Ram) replied (33)—

[Note :—The reader will observe the seething anger which is on the boiling point in the heart of Valmiki. He, as a true guardian, has not allowed Sita to say anything herself in public, but has interceded on her behalf and staked his own entire reputation at the altar of Sita's purity. It was unbearable for Valmiki that she be subjected to such an absurd ridicule and public humiliation without any fault of hers. He has rebuked Sri Ram in a civilised manner, but most sternly. The rascals who had cast aspersions on her character and integrity as well as the scoundrels amongst those who had come to witness the drama of Sita being put under the glare of public scrutiny, must have been scouring for cover at Valmiki's spluttering, sizzling, searing and vehement anger, fearing for their lives should the sage curse them! The credit for not cursing such fiends to turn to ashes goes to the restraint factor of the exalted sage that Valmiki was. He was all-knowing. He knew that all that is happening is pre-planned between Sri Ram and Sita, and pre-destined. After all, they had to wind up their worldly activities, and some excuse was needed. So why should he unnecessarily curse those who are merely playing their role in the wider picture of the divine story. But his anger and oath protected Sita from all the ignominy for all times to come. In fact, it was far better and superior in gravity, and had greater weightage than if Sita herself had said that she was innocent. For, every culprit says that he/she is innocent; that would have raised further muck, sneers, murmurings and questions. Valmiki's vows settled the matter of Sita's purity once and for all. The reader empathises with Sita and sympthasies with her for the horrible ordeal and sufferings that she had to undergo.]

एवमेतन्महाप्राज्ञ यथा वदसि सुव्रत। प्रत्ययो जनितो मह्यं तव वाक्यैरकिल्बिषैः।। 34।।
लङ्कायामपि दत्तो मे वैदेह्या प्रत्ययो महान्। देवानां पुरतस्तेन मन्दिरे सम्प्रवेशिता।। 35।।

evametanmahāprājña yathā vadasi suvrata/
pratyayau janito mahyaṃ tava vākyairakilbiṣaiḥ//
laṅkāyāmapi datto me vaidehyā pratyayo mahān/
devānāṃ puratastena mandire sampraveśitā//

'Oh the most wise, sagacious, realised and enlightened one (i.e. Valmiki)! Oh the righteous, noble and virtuous one who is steadfast in his vows! It is indeed true what you have said. I have fully believed your words (that Sita is sinless and without the least corruption or blemish) without any kind of reservations whatsoever (34). Vaidehi

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(Sita) had already given a most difficult test in the witness of the Gods at Lanka itself. [See Lanka Kand, Canto 12, verse nos. 74-83.] That is the reason I had brought her home in the first place (35).

सेयं लोकभयाद्ब्रह्मन्नपापापि सती पुरा। सीता मया परित्यक्ता भवांस्तत्क्षन्तुमर्हति।। 36।।
ममैव जातौ जानामि पुत्रावेतौ कुशीलवौ। शुद्धायां जगतीमध्ये सीतायां प्रीतिरस्तु मे।। 37।।

seyaṃ lokabhayādbrahmannapāpāpi satī purā/
sītā mayā parityaktā bhavāṃstatkṣantumarhati//
mamaiva jātau jānāmi putrāvetau kuśīlavau/
śuddhāyāṃ jagatīmadhye sītāyāṃ prītirastu me//

But oh Brahmin! I had left (i.e. abandoned/forsaken) that same sinless, immaculate, pure, blemish free and uncorrupt, most virtuous, righteous, noble, loyal and chaste Sita fearing ignominy, scandalous gossip and public reproach and censor. So, please forgive me for my offence and wrong doings (36). I also know that these two sons Kush and Lav are my sons. Let me have renewed affection for Sita, who is most honourable, virtuous and pure in this world' (37).

[Note :—Verse nos. 34-37 are Sri Ram's confessional statement made in public that he is guilty of unnecessarily putting Sita to such great humiliation, shame and harassment.]

देवाः सर्वे परिज्ञाय रामाभिप्रायमुत्सुकाः। ब्रह्माणमग्रतः कृत्वा समाजग्मुः सहस्त्रशः।। 38।।
प्रजाः समागमन्हृष्टाः सीता कौशेयवासिनी। उदङ्मुखी ह्यधोदृष्टिः प्राञ्जलिर्वाक्यमब्रवीत्।। 39।।

devāḥ sarve parijñāya rāmābhiprāyamutsukāḥ/
brahmāṇamagrataḥ kṛtvā samājagmuḥ sahasraśaḥ//
prajāḥ samāgamanhṛṣṭāḥ sītā kauśeyavāsinī/
udaṅmukhī hyadhodṛṣṭiḥ prāñjalirvākyamabravīt//

At that time, realising the intention of Sri Ram, thousands of Gods assembled there with Brahma in the lead (38). Similarly, numerous citizens and subjects of the kingdom also gathered delightedly at the place. Then Sita, who was wearing silk garments and was standing with lowered eyes and facing north, said with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together (39)—

रामादन्यं यथाहं वै मनसापि न चिन्तये। तथा मे धरणी देवी विवरं दातुमर्हति।। 40।।
तथा शपन्त्याः सीतायाः प्रादुरासीन्महाद्भुतम्। भूतलाद्दिव्यमत्यर्थं सिंहासनमनुत्तमम्।। 41।।

rāmādanyaṃ yathāhaṃ vai manasāpi na cintaye/
tathā me dharaṇī devī vivaraṃ dātumarhati//

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tathā śapantyāḥ sītāyāḥ prādurāsīnmahādbhutam /
bhūtalāddivyamatyarthaṃ siṃhāsanamanuttamam //

'If I do not ever think of any other man except Sri Ram, then goddess Earth should give me shelter!' (40).

As soon as Sita made this most formidable, stern and tragic vow, a most beautiful, magnificent, splendorous and majestic throne appeared from inside the bowls of the earth (41).

[Note :—Verse no. 40 shows Sita's burning anger and vehement indignation seething inside her bosom. Indeed, she had been subjected to such great humiliation, shame and ignominy, and the ordeals and sufferings were all the more painful because she was innocent, pure and had already proved her innocence and purity by the fire at Lanka without any regrets and hesitation. She must have been crying under her breath. It is a remarkable feat of self-restraint that her anger and frustration didn't boil over in an emotional outburst like a suppressed volcano. By asking the earth to split into two and bury her in its bosom was the greatest rebuke and punishment a chaste woman could inflict on the world at large as well as her husband in particular whose pretensions of uprightness, chivalrous righteousness were dashed to the ground when he acknowledged that he had made a mistake by abandoning her though he knew she was pure, and therefore should be forgiven for it; see verse no. 34-37.

What of Sita, any other honourable woman worth dignified herself would have preferred death to this drama and spectacle of Dharma and probity. Sri Ram's confession of wrong doing was the last straw which broke the proverbial camel's back. Sita, by entering the earth, appears to be saying mutely 'you have been very unfair to me, to say the least'. The curse of Sita never ever left Ayodhya. As will be evident from the following narration, the whole city became desolate and exited with Sri Ram during his final departure by taking Samadhi (drowning) in the waters of river Saryu en-masse.]

नागेन्द्रैर्ध्रियमाणं च दिव्यदेहै रविप्रभम्। भूदेवी जानकीं दोर्भ्यां गृहीत्वा स्नेहसंयुता।। 42।।
स्वागतं तामुवाचैनामासने संन्यवेशयत्। सिंहासनस्थां वैदेहीं प्रविशन्तीं रसातलम्।। 43।।
निरन्तरा पुष्पवृष्टिर्दिव्या सीतामवाकिरत्। साधुवादश्च सुमहान् देवानां परमाद्भुतः।। 44।।

nāgendrairdhriyamāṇaṃ ca divyadehai raviprabham /
bhūdevī jānakīṃ dorbhyāṃ gṛhītvā snehasaṃyutā //
svāgataṃ tāmuvācaināmāsane saṃnyaveśayat /
siṃhāsanasthāṃ vaidehīṃ praviśantīṃ rasātalam //
nirantarā puṣpavṛṣṭirdivyā sītāmavākirat /
sādhuvādaśca sumahān devānāṃ paramādbhutaḥ //

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The kings of legendary serpents in divine form had borne that sun-like splendorous, glittering and dazzling magnificent throne. Then the goddess Earth embraced and accepted Sita most affectionately and warmly by her out-stretched arms. She seated her on the throne. When Sita began to sink in the bowls of the earth seated on that throne, there was a constant hail of flowers being showered on her from the heavens, and the Gods broke out in a thunderous applause of praise and blessings for her. This chorus of the Gods was most spectacular and stirring to behold and hear (42-44).

ऊचुश्च बहुधा वाचो ह्यन्तरिक्षगताः सुराः। अन्तरिक्षे च भूमौ च सर्वे स्थावरजङ्गमाः।। 45।।
वानराश्च महाकायाः सीताशपथकारणात्। केचिच्चिन्तापरास्तस्य केचिद्ध्यानपरायणाः।। 46।।

ūcuśca bahudhā vāco hyantarikṣagatāḥ surāḥ /
antarikṣe ca bhūmau ca sarve sthāvarajaṅgamāḥ //
vānarāśca mahākāyāḥ sītāśapathakāraṇāt /
keciccintāparāstasya keciddhyānaparāyaṇāḥ //

The Gods assembled in the sky and said different things simultaneously with a loud chattering voice, while all the movable as well as immovable creatures (i.e. the animate as well as the inanimate) residing in the sky as well as in the terrestrial worlds, including the monkeys with colossus bodies, began to worry over the consequences. They became stunned and stupefied, and entered into a trance-like state on hearing the vows made by Sita (45-46).

केचिद्रामं निरीक्षन्तः केचित्सीतामचेतसः। मुहूर्तमात्रं तत्सर्वं तूष्णीभूतमचेतनम्।। 47।।
सीताप्रवेशनं दृष्ट्वा सर्वं सम्मोहितं जगत्। रामस्तु सर्वं ज्ञात्वैव भविष्यत्कार्यगौरवम्।। 48।।
अजानन्निव दुःखेन शुशोच जनकात्मजाम्। ब्रह्मणा ऋषिभिः सार्धं बोधितो रघुनन्दनः।। 49।।

kecidrāmaṃ nirīkṣantaḥ kecitsītāmacetasaḥ /
muhūrtamātraṃ tatsarvaṃ tūṣṇībhūtamacetanam //
sītāpraveśanaṃ dṛṣṭvā sarvaṃ sammohitaṃ jagat /
rāmastu sarvaṃ jñātvaiva bhaviṣyatkāryagauravam //
ajānanniva duḥkhena śuśoca janakātmajām /
brahmaṇā ṛṣibhiḥ sārdhaṃ bodhito raghunandanaḥ //

Some stared at Sri Ram unblinkingly and others at Sita. They were so shocked, stunned, distraught, dismayed and devastated at the turn of events that they lost consciousness of their surroundings, or literally fainted. For one Murhut (i.e. precisely 1 hour and 48 minutes; but here

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meaning for a short while) the whole awestruck assembly was dumbfounded and stunned into immobility (47). The whole world was awestruck, stunned, mesmerised, distraught and speechless on seeing Sita slowly entering (i.e. sinking into) the bowls of the earth; there was a tragic silence. Sri Ram was well aware of what was to happen in the near future (48), but he pretended to be unaware or ignorant of it, and began sorely lamenting for Sita. At that point of time, Brahma and other sages tried to console Raghunandan (Sri Ram) who was devastated and appeared to be inconsolable (49).

प्रतिबुद्ध इव स्वप्नाच्चकारानन्तराः क्रियाः। विससर्ज ऋषीन् सर्वानृत्विजो ये समागताः॥ 50॥
तान् सर्वान् धनरत्नाद्यैस्तोषयामास भूरिशः। उपादाय कुमारौ तावयोध्यामगमत्प्रभुः॥ 51॥
तदादि निःस्पृहो रामः सर्वभोगेषु सर्वदा। आत्मचिन्तापरो नित्यमेकान्ते समुपस्थितः॥ 52॥

pratibaddha iva svapnāccakārānantarāḥ kriyāḥ/
visasarja ṛṣīn sarvānṛtvijo ye samāgatāḥ//
tān sarvān dhanaratnādyaistoṣayāmāsa bhūriśaḥ/
upādāya kumārau tāvayodhyāmagamatprabhuḥ//
dadādi niḥspṛho rāmaḥ sarvabhogeṣu sarvadā/
ātmacintāparo nityamekānte samupasthitaḥ//

Soon thereafter, he (Sri Ram) recovered himself as if waking up from a sleep, and completed the remaining part of the religious sacrifice that was interrupted by these unfortunate and devastating happenings. Once the rituals were finished, he satisfied all the sages and hermits who had been invited to participate actively in the actual performance of the religious rituals by duly honouring them and amply rewarding them with jewels and other types of priceless treasures. Then they were bid farewell. After that, Sri Ram brought those two boys (Kush and Lav) to Ayodhya (50-51).

From that time onwards, Sri Ram renounced all comforts and pleasures of the world and spent his time alone, always meditating and contemplating upon his true and pure self, i.e. upon his Atma like a true renunciate recluse (52).

एकान्ते ध्याननिरते एकदा राघवे सति। ज्ञात्वा नारायणं साक्षात्कौसल्या प्रियवादिनी॥ 53॥
भक्त्यागत्य प्रसन्नं तं प्रणता प्राह हृष्टधीः। राम त्वं जगतामादिरादिमध्यान्तवर्जितः॥ 54॥

ekānte dhyānanirate ekadā rāghave sati/
jñātvā nārāyaṇaṃ sākṣātkausalyā priyavādinī//

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bhaktyāgatya prasannaṃ taṃ praṇatā prāha hṛṣṭadhīḥ /
rāma tvaṃ jagatāmādirādimadhyāntavarjitaḥ //

One day, when Raghav (Sri Ram) was meditating alone, his mother, the sweet and pleasant talking Kaushalya who had recognised him to be Lord Narayan himself, came to him infused with devotion, and finding him in a pleasant mood, she said cheerfully with a sweet and reverential voice, 'Oh Ram! You are the primary cause of this world, but yourself are without any beginning, middle or an end (53-54).

परमात्मा परानन्दः पूर्णः पुरुष ईश्वरः। जातोऽसि मे गर्भगृहे मम पुण्यातिरेकतः।। 55।।
अवसाने ममाप्यद्य समयोऽभूद्रघूत्तम। नाद्याप्यबोधजः कृत्स्नो भवबन्धो निवर्तते।। 56।।

paramātmā parānandaḥ pūrṇaḥ puruṣa īśvaraḥ /
jāto'si me garbhagṛhe mama puṇyātirekataḥ //
avasāne mamāpyadya samayo'bhūdraghuttama /
nādyāpyabodhajaḥ kṛtsno bhavabandho nivartate //

You are the sublime, transcendental and supreme Soul, an embodiment/image of supreme bliss, peace, happiness, contentedness and tranquility, are complete in all respects, are the resident of the dwelling representing the body of the creature as its Atma, and are the supreme Lord of all. It is due to the emergence of my great auspicious fortunes and fructification of rewards attributable to my virtuousness and righteousness that you have taken birth from my womb as my son (55).

Oh the most exalted of the Raghus'. Now at the last moment, I have got some time to ask you something, for until now I have not been able to break my shackles of ignorance pertaining to this (delusory, mundane, entrapping, artificial) world (56).

इदानीमपि मे ज्ञानं भवबन्धनिवर्तकम्। यथा सङ्क्षेपतो भूयात्तथा बोधय मां विभो।। 57।।
निर्वेदवादिनीमेवं मातरं मातृवत्सलः। दयालुः प्राह धर्मात्मा जराजर्जरितां शुभाम्।। 58।।

idānīmapi me jñānaṃ bhavabandhanivartakam /
yathā saṅkṣepato bhūyāttathā bodhaya māṃ vibho //
nirvedavādinīmevaṃ mātaraṃ mātṛvatsalaḥ /
dayāluḥ prāha dharmātmā jarājarjaritāṃ śubhām //

Oh Vibho (omnipresent, all-pervading, almighty, eternal, benevolent, magnanimous, munificent Lord; it is an epithet for Lord Vishnu)! Tell me in brief some way by which I can still acquire that

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pristine wisdom, enlightened erudition and sublime knowledge of reality and truth which will help me cut through the web of this mundane existence and set myself free from its shackles' (57).

Then the Lord, who is most devoted to his mother, is compassionate and merciful, righteous and virtuous, replied to his mother who had spoken such words of renunciation and detachment, was very aged, and had an infirm and worn-out body, but was most auspicious and virtuous (58)—

मार्गास्त्रयो मया प्रोक्ताः पुरा मोक्षाप्तिसाधकाः। कर्मयोगो ज्ञानयोगो भक्तियोगश्च शाश्वतः।। 59।।
भक्तिर्विभिद्यते मातस्त्रिविधा गुणभेदतः। स्वभावो यस्य यस्तेन तस्य भक्तिर्विभिद्यते।। 60।।

mārgāstrayo mayā proktāḥ purā mokṣāptisādhakāḥ/
karmayogo jñānayogo bhaktiyogaśca śāśvataḥ//
bhaktirvibhidyate mātastrividhā guṇabhedataḥ/
svabhāvo yasya yastena tasya bhaktirvibhidyate//

'In some ancient time, I had prescribed the 3-fold path to deliverance, emancipation and salvation—viz. 'Karmyog' (the path of action), Gyan Yog (the path of pursuing truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment), and Bhakti Yog (the path of devotion and service to the Lord). These paths are well established, and ancient, eternal and truthful (59).

Oh mother! Bhakti can be classified into three categories depending upon the mental setup of the seeker (60).

[Note :—These concepts are elaborately explained in Aranya Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 19-55; Canto 10, verse nos. 20-31; Kishkindha Kand, Canto 4, verse nos. 11-40; Uttar Kand, Canto 5 (Ram Gita); Canto 6, verse nos. 38-56 amongst others.

The three paths emphasised by the Lord are briefly summarized as follows—lead to self realisation in a man or makes him aware of the super conscious residing in him. They are—(i) Karma Yoga, (ii) Gyan Yoga, and (iii) Bhakti Yoga.

(i) Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get 'involved or attached' to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn't be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one's offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever

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is done in which a person's subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

(ii) Gyan Yoga involves the intellect and mind to determine and delineate the true and the false; it helps to access and understand the reality and falsehood behind the manifested visible world which appears to be 'real' but is actually like a 'shadow of the truth'. This Gyan Yoga helps to establish the mind firmly into seeing unity in diversity. Those following Gyan Yoga are called 'seers' because they can 'see' beyond the visible, multifarious and bewildering variety of this false world. Gyan Yoga is in the realm of the intellect and discriminating mind of a creature.

(iii) Bhakti Yoga refers to having devotion for a chosen Godhead who is a person's ideal, on whom he showers all his adoration, and on whom he focuses his attention. He is emotionally and sentimentally involved with his deity. Hence, the heart is the realm of Bhakti Yoga; it helps to commune with the divine.]

यस्तु हिंसां समुद्दिश्य दम्भं मात्सर्यमेव वा। भेददृष्टिश्च संरम्भी भक्तो मे तामसः स्मृतः ।। 61 ।।
फलाभिसन्धिर्भोगार्थी धनकामो यशस्तथा। अर्चादौ भेदबुद्ध्या मां पूजयेत्स तु राजसः ।। 62 ।।
परस्मिन्नर्पितं यस्तु कर्म निर्हरणाय वा। कर्तव्यमिति वा कुर्याद्भेदबुद्ध्या स सात्त्विकः ।। 63 ।।

yastu hiṃsāṃ samuddiśya dambhaṃ mātsaryameva vā /
bhedadṛṣṭiśca saṃrambhī bhakto me tāmasaḥ smṛtaḥ //
phalābhisandhirbhogārthī dhanakāmo yaśastathā /
arcādau bhedabuddhyā māṃ pūjayetsa tu rajasaḥ //
parasminnarpitaṃ yastu karma nirharaṇāya vā /
kartavyamiti vā kuryādbhedabuddhyā sa sāttvikaḥ //

[There are three types of devotees depending upon the predominance of one or the other types of the three qualities called Gunas in them.]

Those who are savage and cruel, those who have arrogance, vanity, ego and false pride, those who have hatred, animosity, envy, malice, ill-will and jealousy in their heart, those who are biased and see duality in this creation, have vested interests and are not equitable, even and uniform towards all, and those who have anger and mercurial temper, are wrathful and seek vengeance—such persons are called 'Tamas Bhakts'. [That is, such devotees have the worst type of qualities in them.] (61).

Those who seek, yearn for or covet rewards, those who seek

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and yearn for comforts or pleasures of the materialistic world, gratification of senses and pursue wealth and fame, and those who differentiate between various methods to worship me—such persons are called 'Rajas Bhakts'. [Rajas is the medium quality in a man.] (62).

Those who have the thought that one must not sit idle and instead do something, and those who do deeds in order to offer all the rewards to the Lord, or in other words, regards all the work as being Lord's work and himself as merely doing his assigned duties— persons with such a thought process and inclination of mind are called 'Satwic Bhakts' (63).

[Note :—These three qualities have been extensively described in Uttar Kand, canto 5 called Ram Gita, as well as in canto 6, verse no.45-50.]

मद्गुणाश्रयणादेव मय्यनन्तगुणालये। अविच्छिन्ना मनोवृत्तिर्यथा गङ्गाम्बुनोऽम्बुधौ॥64॥
तदेव भक्तियोगस्य लक्षणं निर्गुणस्य हि। अहैतुक्यव्यवहिता या भक्तिर्मयि जायते॥65॥
सा मे सालोक्यसामीप्यसार्ष्टिसायुज्यमेव वा। ददात्यपि न गृह्णन्ति भक्ता मत्सेवनं विना॥66॥

madguṇāśrayaṇādeva mayyanantaguṇālaye/
avicchinnā manovṛttiryathā gaṅgāmbuno'mbudhau//
tadeva bhaktiyogasya lakṣaṇaṃ nirguṇasya hi/
ahaitukyavyavahitā yā bhaktirmayi jāyate//
sā me sālokyasāmīpyasārṣṭisāyujyameva vā/
dadātyapi na gṛhṇanti bhaktā matsevanaṃ vinā//

If the natural and inherent tendencies and inclinations of a person's mind and intellect are constantly, consistently and persistently diverted towards me and fixed upon me and my immeasurably auspicious virtues and divine form that is sublime, ethereal, eternal and transcendental, then these are the signs of my devotion that is called 'Nirgun Bhakti' (i.e. devotion for the supreme transcendental Being who is without attributes, forms and names). Towards this end, the medium is to sing my auspicious glories and virtues deeds (by narrating, reading, reciting, singing in unison, writing, discussing and thinking about my divine stories, qualities and the noble virtues and values for which I stand). In this state of existence, the devotee loses his individuality and merges his own self with me even as the water of the holy river Ganges ceaselessly and constantly flows into and merges with the ocean to become one with it when it falls in it.

As a result of this unwavering, steady, consistent and constant

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devotion for me that sprouts in the pure heart of my ardent and wise devotee who is selfless and sincere in his spiritual pursuits, four types of Muktis are easily available. These four forms of emancipation and salvation that are bestowed upon him are known as (a) Salokya, (b) Samipya, (c) Saristi, and (d) Saujya.

But my true devotee is so devoted to me that he would rather choose to serve me than accept any one or more forms of Mukti. [That is, a true and ardent devotee does not accept them or anything else except the opportunity to serve me, even if these Mokshas or Muktis are offered to him for the asking.] (64-66).

[Note :—The four categories of emancipation and salvation as described in verse no. 66 are as follows :— (a) Salokya—To attain Vaikunth or heaven or the abode of Lord Vishnu; in other words to live in the abode of the chosen deity; (b) Samipya—To remain close to the Lord every moment; (c) Saristi, also known as Sarupya—To achieve glory, fame and renown similar to the Lord; to have a form and virtues similar to the chosen deity; and (d) Saujya—To become one with the Lord; to merge one's own self with the chosen deity. See also Aranya kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 20-31 in this context.]

स एवात्यन्तिको योगो भक्तिमार्गस्य भामिनि। मद्भावं प्राप्नुयात्तेन अतिक्रम्य गुणत्रयम्।। 67।।
महता कामहीनेन स्वधर्माचरणेन च। कर्मयोगेन शस्तेन वर्जितेन विहिंसनात्।। 68।।
मद्दर्शनस्तुतिमहापूजाभिः स्मृतिवन्दनैः। भूतेषु मद्भावनया सङ्गेनासत्यवर्जनैः।। 69।।
बहुमानेन महतां दुःखिनामनुकम्पया। स्वसमानेषु मैत्र्या च यमादीनां निषेवया।। 70।।
वेदान्तवाक्यश्रवणान्मम नामानुकीर्तनात्। सत्सङ्गेनार्जवेनैव ह्यहमः परिवर्जनात्।। 71।।
काङ्क्षया मम धर्मस्य परिशुद्धान्तरो जनः। मद्गुणश्रवणादेव याति मामञ्जसा जनः।। 72।।

sa evātyantiko yogo bhaktimārgasya bhāmini /
madbhāvaṃ prāpnuyāttena atikramya guṇatrayam //
mahatā kāmahīnena svadharmācaraṇena ca /
karmayogena śastena varjitena vihiṃsanāt //
maddarśanastutimahāpūjābhiḥ smṛtivandanaiḥ /
bhūteṣu madbhāvanayā saṅgenāsatyavarjanaiḥ //
bahumānena mahatāṃ duḥkhināmanukampayā /
svasamāneṣu maitryā ca yamādīnāṃ niṣevayā //
vedāntavākyaśravaṇānmama nāmānukīrtanāt /
satsaṅgenārjavenaiva hyahamaḥ parivarjanāt //
kāṅkṣayā mama dharmasya pariśuddhāntaro janaḥ /
madguṇaśravaṇādeva yāti māmañjasā janaḥ //

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Oh noble lady ('Bhamini'; mother)! This is the best, foremost and most important means and path to adopt while following the path of devotion and worship. [The 'means and path' referred here are the ones prescribed in verse no. 64-66.] By adopting it and following it, the devotee transcends all the three Gunas (Satwic, Rajsic, Tamsic) and becomes one with me (67).

Now I shall tell you other means to have devotion for the Nirgun form of the Lord—i.e. the formless, attributeless, nameless, unqualified and sublime entity that is all-pervading, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, transcendental and supreme in the creation. One should follow most righteously and selflessly the assigned duties and behavioural norms according to the section of the society to which one belongs without any attachments to the actions and the deeds as well as their results; one should follow the best doctrine of non-violence while doing anything (68); one should reverentially have my Darshan (holy viewings of my relics, pilgrim sites, symbols etc.); one should pray to me and sing devotional hymns in my honour; one should worship me, show respect and reverence to me and adore me; one should constantly remember and honour me; one should regard all creatures as my image (or in other words, think that I am present in all the creatures); one should abandon lies, fraud, cheating, deceit and falsehood, and instead of it, one should find and pursue the company of saints and holy people (69); one should show the greatest of respect and honour to those who are noble and great souls; one should be merciful, kind and compassionate towards those who are miserable, distressed, unfortunate, in need, in agony and suffering; one should befriend people of same standing in society (i.e. be on friendly terms with one's peers and compatriots); one should rigorously follow the laws of 'Yam and Niyam' (i.e. restraint of passions, sense organs, mind-intellect apparatus etc. is called Yam, and following the path of righteousness, probity, propriety and nobility is called Niyam) (70); one should attentively hear the various edicts, proclamations, tenets, maxims and great sayings as pronounced by the Vedas; one should chant and sing my holy name, glories and virtues in chorus with a group of other devotees; one should have the company (communion, interaction) of holy, pious and saintly people (where spiritual matters are talked about) as well as have humble, soft, sweet and pleasant temperament and demeanors; one should abandon Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness and arrogance) (71); and

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one should have an honest and sincere wish and desire to follow the auspicious path of spiritualism and righteousness—such a person is deemed to have purified and cleansed his mind-intellect complex (the subtle body of the creatures) from all impurities. Having done so, if he hears the legends of my auspicious and noble virtues, glories, values and characteristics, he can easily attain me (i.e. my Nirgun form). That is, he merges his soul into my supreme Soul and becomes one with me (72).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 66 and 67 deal with the Sagun form of Bhakti i.e. the path of devotion and adoration for the Lord's incarnations in flesh and bones as a human being. This is the visible and tangible form of the Lord having attributes and characteristics.

(ii) Verse nos. 68-72 have been clubbed together because they deal with the subject of how to attain Nirgun Bhakti as opposed to Sagun Bhakti. Indeed, from a more secular and practical point of view, one must note that all these qualities will make a man noble and perfect. Perfection, virtuousness and wise discrimination in the behavioural and thought patterns will make a man noble and God-like. His soul would have freed itself from the shackles of worldly muck and slush and elevated itself to a noble stature of Godliness. This upliftment of the soul from the deep pit of slush representing the materialistic, artificial and entrapping world is equivalent to being liberated and delivered from its snare. This is equivalent to emancipation and salvation of the soul. Bhakti is a way to achieve this end. .

(iii) One should refer to Aranya Kand, canto 10, verse no.22-31 where Sri Ram preaches Shabari on the principal types of Bhakti to have a more comprehensive idea of this concept.]

यथा वायुवशाद्गन्धः स्वाश्रयाद्घ्राणमाविशेत्। योगाभ्यासरतं चित्तमेवमात्मानमाविशेत्।। 73।।
सर्वेषु प्राणिजातेषु ह्यहमात्मा व्यवस्थितः। तमज्ञात्वा विमूढात्मा कुरुते केवलं बहिः।। 74।।

yathā vāyuvaśādgandhaḥ svāśrayādghrāṇamāviśet /
yogābhyāsarataṃ cittamevamātmānamāviśet //
sarveṣu prāṇijāteṣu hyahamātmā vyavasthitaḥ /
tamajñātvā vimūḍhātmā kurute kevalaṃ bahiḥ //

Even as 'smell' (aroma, perfume, scent, fragrance, odour) drifts away from its place of origin/source, and aided by the wind/air it enters through the nostrils (the organ for smell) and is then sensed by the creature, the mind-intellect complex (the subtle body of the creature) which is engrossed and soaked in the practice of Yoga (meditation and sincere efforts to understand the true nature of the Atma by concentration, contemplation and reflection) also gets

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inclined towards the Atma and ultimately merges with the Atma (which is pure consciousness, the ultimate reality and an irrefutable truth) (73).

I am the one who is present in the form of the Atma or soul (pure consciousness) in all the creatures. An ignorant and foolish person who is unaware of this basic fact associates himself with the external world or the external features of the creature. [That is, he treats the gross world as the real thing and the gross body of the creature as its truthful identity. This fundamental error of conception is at the root cause of all perplexities and consternations in this world.] (74).

क्रियोत्पन्नैर्नैकभेदैर्द्रव्यैर्मे नाम्ब तोषणम्। भूतावमानिनार्चायामर्चितोऽहं न पूजितः।। 75।।
तावन्मामर्चयेद्देवं प्रतिमादौ स्वकर्मभिः। यावत्सर्वेषु भूतेषु स्थितं चात्मनि न स्मरेत्।। 76।।

kriyotpannairnaikabhedairdravyairme nāmba toṣaṇam /
bhūtāvamāninārcāyāmarcito'haṃ na pūjitaḥ //
tāvanmāmarcayeddevaṃ pratimādau svakarmabhiḥ /
yāvatsarveṣu bhūteṣu sthitaṃ cātmani na smaret //

But mere physical, mechanical activity of doing worship and adoration does not please me. Those people who reproach, show contempt, disrespect, look down upon, scoff at and treat any living being with disdain (i.e. insult them, scorn at them, subject them to ridicule and humiliation, hate and detest other living creatures) and pretend to worship and adore me in an idol/icon/statue/image/any other symbol—verily I say, I don't accept their worship! (75).

I, who am the supreme Lord, shall be worshipped in idols and other forms by various rituals only till the time the seeker does not realise or recognise that I am present in all the creatures as well inside the seeker himself in the form of his pure Atma/soul/consciousness (76).

[Note :—(i) Verse nos. 74-76 should be read in conjunction. The meaning is resoundingly clear—if we think that we are superior to others in anyway because we worship any particular form or symbol which the other person does not, and subject him to scorn and ridicule—calling him a heretic, a non-believer—we are living in a fool's paradise. The Lord God can never be deceived by our pretensions of holiness and he cannot be pleased with us because, as verse no.75 testifies, the Lord lives in the other person also as much as he lives in the idol, statue, image or any other symbol. Insulting or deriding any person for his personal views and method of worship of the Lord makes a fool of ourselves. In a similar vein, if we have the powerful enough eyes to see life in an idol or image or any other form or

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symbol of the divinity, shouldn't we see the Lord in a live creature who is, by the Lord's own testimony, an image of the Lord himself. This is the essence of verse no. 76. See also verse nos. 77-78 below which are very explicit on this subject. Though Sri Ram has expounded 3-fold path to Moksha (verse no. 59), and says that it can be achieved by following any one of the paths (verse nos. 81-82) according to the mental caliber of the devotee or seeker, he has—on a separate occasion—emphasised that the path of Gyan (truthful knowledge, wisdom, enlightenment, contemplation, discrimination, delving deep into the basics of any thing to arrive at the truth by self study, constant and persistent pursuit of truth and reality, relentless questioning and eliminating the chaff from the grain using the process of Neti-Neti prescribed by the Vedas) is the supreme and most desired path to follow. (See Uttar Kand, Canto 5 called Ram Gita which is the highest citadel in spiritual realm, coming out from the mouth of Sri Ram himself, and a thorough reading of it will clarify the above observations).

(ii) So, we may say, in simple language that idol and physical ritualistic worship is only a primary stage for the seeker in the path of spiritualism. It is akin to a primary school. One cannot call oneself educated by merely passing a high school certificate exam, for the world of education and knowledge is very vast. After high school, there is secondary, graduate, post graduate, doctoral levels of education to be done to be called really educated. Similarly, there are higher stages of worship and adoration for the Lord than mere physical rituals done in mechanical way.

(iii) Incidentally, there are a number of Upanishads that say almost an identical thing in explicit terms. Some are—(a) Maitreyyu-panishad, canto 2, verse no.21, 26; (b) Jabal Darshan Upanishad, canto 4, verse no.50-59; and (c) Sanyaso-panishad, canto 2, verse no.74,75, 97.]

यस्तु भेदं प्रकुरुते स्वात्मनश्च परस्य च। भिन्नदृष्टेर्भयं मृत्युस्तस्य कुर्यान्न संशयः॥ 77॥
मामतः सर्वभूतेषु परिच्छिन्नेषु संस्थितम्। एकं ज्ञानेन मानेन मैत्र्या चार्चेदभिन्नधीः॥ 78॥

yastu bhedaṃ prakurute svātmanaśca parasya ca/
bhinnadṛṣṭerbhayaṃ mṛtyustasya kuryānna saṃśayaḥ//
māmataḥ sarvabhūteṣu paricchinneṣu saṃsthitam/
ekaṃ jñānena mānena maitryā cārcedabhinnadhiḥ//

He who distinguishes between his own Atma (microcosmic soul which is pure consciousness) and the Parmatma (macrocosmic, transcendental, supreme Soul which is also pure, sublime consciousness) is bound to have fear from death, there is no doubt about it[1] (77).

Hence, my true devotee is one who does not discriminate between

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different creatures and recognises that I am universally present uniformly in all of them, as well as everywhere. With this knowledge and awareness, he worships me by showing respect and honour, friendship and brotherhood to all, without any discrimination and distinction[2] (78).

[Note :—[1]If one is foolish enough not to understand the basic tenet of spiritualism that the Atma of the individual is the same as the Atma of the creation, and deliverance entails merger of these two into one single indistinguishable entity, and that this Atma is imperishable and eternal, is without any fears and consternations, is unattached to this world, does not do anything that would force it to enter the cycle of birth and death in order to bear the fruits of the deeds that it has done, and so on and so forth as described in the various Gospels of this Ramayan, then obviously he fears death even as a man is afraid of a ghost if he does not realise that there is in fact no thing as a ghost; the latter is simply an imagination of a hallucinating mind.

[2]This verse as well as the following one and the ones appearing earlier in connection with symbol worship are prime examples of secular credentials of Sri Ram. It is an irony that Adhyatma Ramayan's pristine philosophy and broad outlook has not opened our eyes as much as it should have done.]

चेतसैवानिशं सर्वभूतानि प्रणमेत्सुधीः। ज्ञात्वा मां चेतनं शुद्धं जीवरूपेण संस्थितम्।। 79।।
तस्मात्कदाचिन्नेक्षेत भेदमीश्वरजीवयोः। भक्तियोगो ज्ञानयोगो मया मातरुदीरितः।। 80।।

cetasaivāniśaṃ sarvabhūtāni praṇametsudhīḥ/
jñātvā māṃ cetanaṃ śuddhaṃ jīvarūpeṇa saṃsthitam//
tasmātkadācinnekṣeta bhedamīśvarajīvayoḥ/
bhaktiyogo jñānayogo mayā mātarudīritaḥ//

Recognising the fact that my divine, pure, conscious, eternal, truthful, supreme, sublime form resides in all the creatures (or manifests itself in the form of different creatures)[1], a wise person is he who mentally bows before and shows respects and honour to all the creatures, day and night (i.e. always; constantly, consistently and persistently) (79).

Hence, one must never distinguish between a living creature (Jiva) and God, the Lord. Oh mother! I have described to you in brief about the two paths of Bhakti (devotion and worship) as well as of Gyan (knowledge, wisdom, erudition and enlightenment) (80).

[Note :—[1]The Lord refers to the Atma that is uniformly and universally

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present in all the creatures in this world. This individual Atma is none other than the supreme Soul which is synonymous with Parmatma in the divine being of Lord Ram. Therefore, all the creatures of this creation are none but the same supreme transcendental Atma revealed in as many forms as there are creatures.

Please also refer Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse nos. 18 and 47 for more elaboration on the path of Gyan.]

आलम्ब्यैकतरं वापि पुरुषः शुभमृच्छति। ततो मां भक्तियोगेन मातः सर्वहृदि स्थितम्।। 81।।
पुत्ररूपेण वा नित्यं स्मृत्वा शान्तिमवाप्स्यसि। श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं कौसल्यानन्दसंयुता।। 82।।
रामं सदा हृदि ध्यात्वा छित्त्वा संसारबन्धनम्। अतिक्रम्य गतीस्तिस्रोऽप्यवाप परमां गतिम्।। 83।।

ālambyaikataraṃ vāpi puruṣaḥ śubhamṛcchati/
tato māṃ bhaktiyogena mātaḥ sarvahṛdi sthitam//
putrarūpeṇa vā nityaṃ smṛtvā śāntimavāpsyasi/
śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ kausalyānandasaṃyutā//
rāmaṃ sadā hṛdi dhyātvā chittvā saṃsārabandhanam/
atikramya gatīstisro'pyavāpa paramāṃ gatim//

A man reaps immense benefits, welfares and auspiciousness by adopting and following any one of these two paths. Hence, oh mother, by recognising the fact that I am present in the heart of all creatures (i.e. following the path of 'Gyan')(81), or by constantly remembering me as your son Ram by following the path of devotion (or Bhakti), you shall find peace and tranquility'.

Hearing these words of Sri Ram, Kaushalya was fully contented and exhilarated (82). Thereafter, she constantly remembered him in her heart[1], thereby cutting through the fetters of this mundane, delusory and entrapping world. As a consequence, she transcended the three types of ends for a creature at the time of death, and attained the best amongst them which is the supreme state of oneness with the Lord (83).

[Note :—(i) [1]It must be carefully noted here that it was not that Kaushalya did not remember Lord Ram in her heart earlier, but that remembrance for him was as her dear and loving son and not as the supreme transcendental Atma residing in her own heart. When the Lord preached her, she became wiser and understood the essential tenets of spiritual philosophy and thereby enshrined the Lord in her heart not as her son but as the Atma. This realisation and awakening was instrumental in her emancipation and ultimate salvation.

(ii) The four types of end that a devotee can have are described in verse

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no. 66, footnote. (ii) Verse nos. 53-82 can be called the Gospel of Sri Ram for Kaushalya. They should be read in conjunction with Uttar Kand, Canto 5 (Ram Gita), Kishkindha Kand, Canto 4 (Kriya Yog) and gospel for Shabari in Aranya Kand, Canto 10, verse nos. 20-31 as described by Sri Ram himself.]

कैकेयी चापि योगं रघुपतिगदितं पूर्वमेवाधिगम्य
श्रद्धाभक्तिप्रशान्ता हृदि रघुतिलकं भावयन्ती गतासुः।
गत्वा स्वर्गं स्फुरन्ती दशरथसहिता मोदमानावतस्थे
माता श्रीलक्ष्मणस्याप्यतिविमलमतिः प्राप भर्तुः समीपम्।। 84।।

kaikeyī cāpi yogaṃ raghupatigaditaṃ pūrvamevādhigamya
śraddhābhaktipraśāntā hṛdi raghutilakaṃ bhāvayantī gatāsuḥ /
gatvā svargaṃ sphurantī daśarathasahitā modamānāvatasthe
mātā śrīlakṣmaṇasyāpyativimalamatiḥ prāpa bhartuḥ samīpam //

Similarly, Kaikeyi too invoked the path of Gyan (enlightenment and wisdom) and Yoga (meditation and contemplation) enunciated and expounded by Raghupati (Sri Ram) to her previously during her visit to Chitrakoot and meeting him there. [See Ayodhya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 63-68.] She concentrated upon the divine and holy form of Sri Ram in her heart with due reverence, devotion, faith and conviction ('Shraddha' and 'Bhakti') as well as with tranquility, steadfastness and peace of mind, and then she left her mortal coil (i.e. she died). She went to the heaven to join Dashrath in his majestic and divine form, and lived there happily with him. In a similar way, Laxman's mother Sumitra, who was of a most pure and wise mind, also went to find a place near her husband in the heaven (84).

[Note :—All the three mothers have made their exit from this world in verse nos. 83 and 84 and have assumed spirit forms to remain with Dashrath in his heavenly abode.]

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Uttar Kand — Canto 8

Arrival of Kaal; Tantrums of Sage Durvasa; Abandonment of Laxman and his departure for the heavens

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

अथ काले गते कस्मिन् भरतो भीमविक्रमः। युधाजिता मातुलेन ह्याहूतोऽगात्ससैनिकः।। 1।।
रामाज्ञया गतस्तत्र हत्वा गन्धर्वनायकान्। तिस्रः कोटीः पुरे द्वे तु निवेश्य रघुनन्दनः।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

atha kāle gate kasmin bharato bhīmavikramaḥ /
yudhājitā mātulena hyāhūto'gātsasainikaḥ //
rāmājñayā gatastatra hatvā gandharvanāyakān /
tisraḥ koṭīḥ pure dve tu niveśya raghunandanaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! After some time, the most valiant Bharat got an invitation from his maternal uncle Udhajit (1), and taking Sri Ram's permission, he went there with his army. There, Raghunandan (Bharat) killed almost three crore (i.e. 30 million) Gandharvas in the battle and established two cities (2).

पुष्करं पुष्करावत्यां तक्षं तक्षशिलाह्वये। अभिषिच्य सुतौ तत्र धनधान्यसुहृद्वृतौ।। 3।।
पुनरागत्य भरतो रामसेवापरोऽभवत्। ततः प्रीतो रघुश्रेष्ठो लक्ष्मणं प्राह सादरम्।। 4।।

puṣkaraṃ puṣkarāvatyāṃ takṣaṃ takṣaśilāhvaye /
abhiṣicya sutau tatra dhanadhānyasuhṛdvṛtau //
punarāgatya bharato rāmasevāparo'bhavat /
tataḥ prīto raghuśreṣṭho lakṣmaṇaṃ prāha sādaram //

He crowned his elder son Puskar on the throne of Puskarawati, and his other son Taksha on the throne of Taxila. They were richly provided with wealth and fortunes as well as favourable compatriots and ministers (3). Then Bharat returned back to Sri Ram and involved himself in his service. After that the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) said affectionately to Laxman (4)—

उभौ कुमारौ सौमित्रे गृहीत्वा पश्चिमां दिशम्। तत्र भिल्लान्विनिर्जित्य दुष्टान् सर्वापकारिणः।। 5।।
अङ्गदश्चित्रकेतुश्च महासत्त्वपराक्रमौ। द्वयोर्द्वे नगरे कृत्वा गजाश्वधनरत्नकैः।। 6।।
अभिषिच्य सुतौ तत्र शीघ्रमागच्छ मां पुनः। रामस्याज्ञां पुरस्कृत्य गजाश्वबलवाहनः।। 7।।
गत्वा हत्वा रिपून् सर्वान् स्थापयित्वा कुमारकौ। सौमित्रिः पुनरागत्य रामसेवापरोऽभवत्।। 8।।

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ubhau kumārau saumitre gṛhītvā paścimāṃ diśam /
tatra bhillanvinirjitya duṣṭān sarvāpakāriṇaḥ //
aṅgadaścitraketuśca mahāsattvaparākramau /
dvayordve nagare kṛtvā gajāśvadhanaratnakaiḥ //
abhiṣicya sutau tatra śīghramāgaccha māṃ punaḥ /
rāmasyājñāṃ puraskṛtya gajāśvabalavāhanaḥ //
gatvā hatvā ripūn sarvān sthāpayitvā kumārakau /
saumitriḥ punarāgatya rāmasevāparo'bhavat //

'Oh the son of Sumitra (Laxman)! Take your two sons and go in the western direction. There, conquer the wicked Bhil tribals who cause distress and harm to everyone (5). Establish two cities for your two sons, the most valiant and valorous Angad and Chitraketu. Anoint them on the throne to the accompaniment of all royal paraphernalia, such as elephants, horses, wealth, gems and jewels etc. Soon thereafter, come back to me'. Accepting this command from Sri Ram, Laxman went with his forces consisting of, inter-alia, elephants, horses and infantry (6), slayed all the enemies (the Bhils), installed these two sons of his on the throne of the two cities, and then came back to serve Sri Ram as before (7-8).

[Note :—Verse no. 3 tells us the name of Bharat's sons, and verse no. 6 about Laxman's sons.]

ततस्तु काले महति प्रयाते रामं सदा धर्मपथे स्थितं हरिम्।
द्रष्टुं समागादृषिवेषधारी कालस्ततो लक्ष्मणमित्युवाच।। 9।।

tatastu kāle mahati prayāte rāmaṃ sadā dharmapathe sthitaṃ harim /
draṣṭuṃ samāgādṛṣiveṣadhārī kālastato lakṣmaṇamityuvāca //

Thereafter, after a passage of long time, Kaal (Death personified) came disguised as a hermit to have Darshan (holy viewing and communion) of Sri Hari (Sri Ram) who is always steadfast on the path of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety and noble conduct). He said to Laxman (9)—

निवेदयस्वातिबलस्य दूतं मां द्रष्टुकामं पुरुषोत्तमाय।
रामाय विज्ञापनमस्ति तस्य महर्षिमुख्यस्य चिराय धीमन्।। 10।।

nivedayasvātibalasya dūtaṃ māṃ draṣṭukāmaṃ puruṣottamāya /
rāmāya vijñāpanamasti tasya maharṣimukhyasya cirāya dhīman //

'Oh the wise one! Please go and tell Sri Ram, who is the most exalted

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and most superior amongst men, that sage Atibal's messenger has come with a long message from the sage for him. I will take a long time in conveying the sage's message to him' (10).

तस्य तद्वचनं श्रुत्वा सौमित्रिस्त्वरयान्वितः। आचचक्षेऽथ रामाय स सम्प्राप्तं तपोधनम्।। 11।।
एवं ब्रुवन्तं प्रोवाच लक्ष्मणं राघवो वचः। शीघ्रं प्रवेश्यतां तात मुनिः सत्कारपूर्वकम्।। 12।।

tasya tadvacanaṃ śrutvā saumitristvarayānvitaḥ/
ācacakṣe'tha rāmāya sa samprāptaṃ tapodhanam//
evaṃ bruvantaṃ provāca lakṣmaṇaṃ rāghavo vacaḥ/
śīghraṃ praveśyatāṃ tāta muniḥ satkārapūrvakam//

Laxman expeditiously conveyed to Sri Ram the news of the arrival of that exalted hermit who was well endowed with the spiritual wealth of Tapa (austerities and penances) (11). When Laxman had told him about it, Raghav (Sri Ram) said, 'Oh dear son! Go and bring the hermit (the messenger of sage Atibal) immediately with great respect' (12).

लक्ष्मणस्तु तथेत्युक्त्वा प्रावेशयत तापसम्। स्वतेजसा ज्वलतं तं घृतसिक्तं यथानलम्।। 13।।
सोऽभिगम्य रघुश्रेष्ठं दीप्यमानः स्वतेजसा। मुनिर्मधुरवाक्येन वर्धस्वेत्याह राघवम्।। 14।।

lakṣmaṇastu tathetyuktvā prāveśayata tāpasam/
svatejasā jvalantaṃ taṃ ghṛtasiktaṃ yathānalam//
so'bhigamya raghuśreṣṭhaṃ dīpyamānaḥ svatejasā/
munirmadhuravākyena vardhasvetyāha rāghavam//

Saying 'alright', Laxman went and brought in that Tapas (i.e. one who does severe penances and austerities) who was brilliantly radiant with the glow of his spiritual powers like a fire kindled with liberal oblations of Ghee (clarified butter) (13). That hermit/sage, who was glowing with his own spiritual radiance, went near the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) and said with a most sweet and pleasant voice, 'Oh Raghav! May your glories and fame be ascendant; may your majesty gain more renown, and may it be everlasting!' (14).

तस्मै स मुनये रामः पूजां कृत्वा यथाविधि। पृष्ट्वानामयमव्यग्रो रामः पृष्टोऽथ तेन सः।। 15।।
दिव्यासने समासीनो रामः प्रोवाच तापसम्। यदर्थमागतोऽसि त्वमिह तत्प्रापयस्व मे।। 16।।

tasmai sa munaye rāmaḥ pūjāṃ kṛtvā yathāvidhi/
pṛṣṭvānāmayamavyagro rāmaḥ pṛṣṭo'tha tena saḥ//
divyāsane samāsīno rāmaḥ provāca tāpasam/
yadarthamāgato'si tvamiha tatprāpayasva me//

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Then Sri Ram systematically worshipped and welcomed that sage/hermit, and then they mutually asked about each other's welfare (15). After that, Sri Ram, who was seated on a magnificent seat, said to the sage/hermit, 'Tell me the reason for which you have come here' (16).

वाक्येन चोदितस्तेन रामेणाह मुनिर्वचः। द्वन्द्वमेव प्रयोक्तव्यमनालक्ष्यं तु तद्वचः।। 17।।
नान्येन चैतच्छ्रोतव्यं नाख्यातव्यं च कस्यचित्। शृणुयाद्वा निरीक्षेद्वा यः स वध्यस्त्वया प्रभो।। 18।।

vākyena coditastena rāmeṇāha munirvacaḥ/
dvandvameva prayoktavyamanālakṣyaṃ tu tadvacaḥ//
nānyena caitacchrotavyaṃ nākhyātavyaṃ ca kasyacit/
śṛṇuyādvā nirīkṣedvā yaḥ sa vadhyastvayā prabho//

Inspired by these words of Sri Ram, the sage/hermit (who was actually Kaal in this disguise) said, 'This message should be strictly between you and me (17), and no third person should hear it. If anyone else hears it or sees us talking, then oh Lord, you will have to kill him' (18).

तथेति च प्रतिज्ञाय रामो लक्ष्मणमब्रवीत्। तिष्ठ त्वं द्वारि सौमित्रे नायात्वत्र जनो रहः।। 19।।
यथागच्छति को वापि स वध्यो मे न संशयः। ततः प्राह मुनिं रामो येन वा त्वं विसर्जितः।। 20।।
यत्ते मनीषितं वाक्यं तद्वदस्व ममाग्रतः। ततः प्राह मुनिर्वाक्यं शृणु राम यथातथम्।। 21।।
ब्रह्मणा प्रेषितोऽस्मीश कार्यार्थे तेऽन्तिकं प्रभो। अहं हि पूर्वजो देव तव पुत्रः परन्तप।। 22।।

tatheti ca pratijñāya rāmo lakṣmaṇamabravīt/
tiṣṭha tvaṃ dvāri saumitre nāyātvatra jano rahaḥ//
yathāgacchati ko vāpi sa vadhyo me na saṃśayaḥ/
tataḥ prāha muniṃ rāmo yena vā tvaṃ visarjitaḥ//
yatte manīṣitaṃ vākyaṃ tadvadasva mamāgrataḥ/
tataḥ prāha munirvākyaṃ śṛṇu rāma yathātatham//
brahmaṇā preṣito'smīśa kāryārthe te'ntikaṃ prabho/
ahaṃ hi pūrvajo deva tava putraḥ parantapa//

Saying 'alright', Sri Ram said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! You stay at the door. Let no one come near me while I am alone here (19). If anyone comes here, there is no doubt that he will die at my hands'. The he turned to the sage/hermit and said, 'Tell me about him who has sent you, and give me the message which he has given you for me'.

The sage/hermit said, 'Listen Sri Ram! Listen to the fact as it is (20-21). Oh Lord God! Brahma has sent me to you. Oh Lord, the conqueror of enemies! I am your elder son (22).

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मायासङ्गमजो वीर कालः सर्वहरः स्मृतः। ब्रह्मा त्वामाह भगवान् सर्वदेवर्षिपूजितः।। 23।।
रक्षितुं स्वर्गलोकस्य समयस्ते महामते। पुरा त्वमेक एवासीर्लोकान् संहृत्य मायया।। 24।।
भार्यया सहितस्त्वं मामादौ पुत्रमजीजनः। तथा भोगवतं नागमनन्तमुदकेशयम्।। 25।।

māyāsaṅgamajo vīra kālaḥ sarvaharaḥ smṛtaḥ /
brahmā tvāmāha bhagavān sarvadevarṣipūjitaḥ //
rakṣituṃ svargalokasya samayaste mahāmate /
purā tvameka evāsīrlokān saṃhṛtya māyayā //
bhāryayā sahitastvaṃ māmādau putramajījanaḥ /
tathā bhogavataṃ nāgamanantamudakeśayam //

Oh the brave one! I was born by your union with Maya (your delusory and cosmic creative powers). I am the destroyer of all, and renowned by the name of Kaal. Lord Brahma—who is worshipped by all the celestial sages, ascetics and hermits (23)—has sent the message to you that your time has come, oh the wise one, to give your protection to the heavens. In some previous time, it was only you who had lived/survived after getting annihilated the rest of the creation (24). Then, by your union with your divine consort named Maya, you had produced me (Kaal) first (as your elder son), followed by the hooded serpent called 'Seshnath Anant' who reclines upon the water (of the legendary Kshir Sagar, the celestial ocean of milk) (25).

[Note :—Verse nos. 23-25 tell us how Kaal, symbolic of the invisible cosmic powers that bring about decay, death and annihilation, and Seshnath, symbolic of the invisible cosmic powers that hold aloft the earth, and in a symbolic way all that was created, were produced. From the cosmic perspective, we all know that the earth is suspended in space which symbolises the legendary water of the Kshir Sagar where this Seshnath resides. The word 'Anant', meaning endless and infinite, appended to the word Seshnath in the above text of verse no. 25 is clearly indicative of the limitlessness of Space.]

मायया जनयित्वा त्वं द्वौ ससत्त्वौ महाबलौ। मधुकैटभकौ दैत्यौ हत्वा मेदोऽस्थिसञ्चयम्।। 26।।
इमां पर्वतसम्बद्धां मेदिनीं पुरुषर्षभ। पद्मे दिव्यार्कसङ्काशे नाभ्यामुत्पाद्य मामपि।। 27।।
मां विधाय प्रजाध्यक्षं मयि सर्वं न्यवेदयत्। सोऽहं संयुक्तसम्भारस्त्वामवोचं जगत्पते।। 28।।

māyayā janayitvā tvaṃ dvau sasattvau mahābalau /
madhukaiṭabhakau daityau hatvā medo'sthisañcayam //
imāṃ parvatasambaddhāṃ medinīṃ puruṣarṣabha /
padme divyārkasaṅkāśe nābhyāmutpādya māmapi //

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māṃ vidhāya prajādhyakṣaṃ mayi sarvaṃ nyavedayat /
so'haṃ saṃyuktasambhārastvāmavocaṃ jagatpate //

Soon thereafter, you had slayed two formidable and most valiant demons Madhu and Kaitav, and had fabricated this earth with its mountains etc. out of their bones and flesh.

[From now onwards, Kaal describes what Brahma had actually said, so the pronouns 'I, me' refer to Brahma and not to Kaal.] "Oh the best amongst men! After that, a divine lotus, which had the radiance of sun, emerged from your navel, and from it you produced me (i.e. Brahma). You had made me the guardian of the subjects of this creation, and delegated the right and powers to create the whole creation (and propagate it further) to me. Oh Lord of the universe! Having thus accepted the responsibility of creating and looking after the world, I pleaded to you (26-28)—

रक्षां विधत्स्व भूतेभ्यो ये मे वीर्यापहारिणः। ततस्त्वं कश्यपाज्जातो विष्णुर्वामनरूपधृक्॥ 29॥
हतवानसि भूभारं वधाद्रक्षोगणस्य च। सर्वासूत्सार्यमाणासु प्रजासु धरणीधर॥ 30॥
रावणस्य वधाकाङ्क्षी मर्त्यलोकमुपागतः। दशवर्षसहस्राणि दशवर्षशतानि च॥ 31॥
कृत्वा वासस्य समयं त्रिदशेष्वात्मनः पुरा। स ते मनोरथः पूर्णः पूर्णे चायुषि ते नृषु॥ 32॥

rakṣāṃ vidhatsva bhūtebhyo ye me vīryāpahāriṇaḥ /
tatastvaṃ kasyapājjāto viṣṇurvāmanarūpadhṛk //
hṛtavānasi bhūbhāraṃ vadhādrakṣogaṇasya ca /
sarvāsūtsāryamāṇāsu prajāsu dharaṇīdhara //
rāvaṇasya vadhākāṅkṣī martyalokamupāgataḥ /
daśavarṣasahasrāṇi daśavarṣaśatāni ca //
kṛtvā vāsasya samayaṃ tridaśeṣvātmanaḥ purā /
sa te manorathaḥ pūrṇaḥ pūrṇe cāyuṣi te nṛṣu //

'Please give protection from those who destroy my sperms (i.e. my creation)'. Then you had manifested yourself in the form of Vishnu Vaaman, the dwarf mendicant in the household of sage Kashyap (29). You had removed the burden of the earth by eliminating the fierce demons. Oh the bearer/sustainer/protector of the earth ('Dharni-dhar'; literally, one who holds, i.e. takes care of the earth)! Presently also you have come to this mundane, mortal world to slay Ravana on observing that the whole population (i.e. subjects of your kingdom represented by the creatures of this world at large) was being endlessly tormented, mercilessly crushed and ceaselessly annihilated by him

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(Ravana). Prior to coming here, you had declared to the Gods a time period of 11 thousand years for your sojourn here in this mortal world. Your life as a human being has completed its full term (or, you have completed that period for which you had assumed a human form as promised by you to the Gods), and as a result, your wishes have been fulfilled (30-32).

कालस्तापसरूपेण त्वत्समीपमुपागमत्। ततो भूयश्च ते बुद्धिर्यदि राज्यमुपासितुम्।। 33।।
तत्तथा भव भद्रं ते एवमाह पितामहः। यदि ते गमने बुद्धिर्देवलोकं जितेन्द्रिय।। 34।।
सनाथा विष्णुना देवा भजन्तु विगतज्वराः। चतुर्मुखस्य तद्वाक्यं श्रुत्वा कालेन भाषितम्।। 35।।
हसन् रामस्तदा वाक्यं कृत्स्नस्यान्तकमब्रवीत्। श्रुतं तव वचो मेऽद्य ममापीष्टतरं तु तत्।। 36।।

kālastāpasarūpeṇa tvatsamīpamupāgamat /
tato bhūyaśca te buddhiryadi rājyamupāsitum //
tattathā bhava bhadraṃ te evamāha pitāmahaḥ /
yadi te gamane buddhirdevalokaṃ jitendriya //
sanāthā viṣṇunā devā bhajantu vigatajvarāḥ /
caturmukhasya tadvākyaṃ śrutvā kālena bhāṣitam //
hasan rāmastadā vākyaṃ kṛtsnasyāntakamabravīt /
śrutaṃ tava vaco me'dya mamāpīṣṭataraṃ tu tat //

Now, therefore, Kaal has come to you (i.e. is going to you) disguised as a Tapas (i.e. one who performs rigorous penances; a hermit). If you wish to stay for some more time and rule over this world, then do as you wish and be blessed".

This is the message of the grandfather (i.e. patriarch of the creation) Brahma for you. Oh the one who has conquered his sense organs, i.e. one who has exemplary self-restraint! On the contrary, should you wish to go to the heaven, then your are most welcome and the Gods shall feel honoured and privileged to have the company of Vishnu amongst their midst once again'. Hearing all these words (message) of Brahma, the four-headed one, through the mouth of Kaal who is the annihilator of all, Sri Ram was amused; he laughed and said to the latter, 'I have heard what you have to say. I have my full consent for it (33-36).

[Note :—Verse nos. 22-28 describe in brief the first offspring of Sri Ram as the Viraat Purush or the Male aspect of Nature. It can graphically be depicted as follows :—

Step 1— Sri Ram as Viraat Purush or Male aspect + Maya as the Female

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aspect (verse no. 25) = their union produced their 1st son called Kaal, and the 2nd son called the hooded Sheshnath (verse 25).

Step 2— Then the demons Madhu and Kaitav were slayed, and their bones and flesh were used to produce this earth (verse no. 26).

Step 3— From the navel of Sri Ram (as Viraat Purush or Vishnu) emerged a divine lotus, and from it was produced Brahma (verse 27-28). He was delegated with the powers to conceive, produce and populate the earth and look after it (verse 28).

Step 4— Brahma pleaded with his own creator Sri Ram as Lord Vishnu or Viraat Purush, to protect the creation from those evil forces that are killing and tormenting whatever Brahma managed to produce. This was the primary cause for various manifestations/revelations of the Lord (verse 29-32).

Step 5— After finishing the job, Sri Ram was expected to revert back to his original form as Viraat Purush (verse 33-36).]

सन्तोषः परमो ज्ञेयस्त्वदागमनकारणात्। त्रयाणामपि लोकानां कार्यार्थं मम सम्भवः॥ 37॥
भद्रं तेऽस्त्वागमिष्यामि यत एवाहमागतः। मनोरथस्तु सम्प्राप्तो न मेऽत्रास्ति विचारणा॥ 38॥
मत्सेवकानां देवानां सर्वकार्येषु वै मया। स्थातव्यं मायया पुत्र यथा चाह प्रजापतिः॥ 39॥

santoṣaḥ paramo jñeyastvadāgamanakāraṇāt/
trayāṇāmapi lokānāṃ kāryārthaṃ mama sambhavaḥ//
bhadraṃ te'stvāgamiṣyāmi yata evāhamāgataḥ/
manorathastu samprāpto na me'trāsti vicāraṇā//
matsevakānāṃ devānāṃ sarvakāryeṣu vai mayā/
sthātavyaṃ māyayā putra yathā cāha prajāpatiḥ//

I am greatly satisfied by your visit. I always manifest/reveal myself as an incarnation for the work of the three worlds (the celestial, the terrestrial and the subterranean worlds) (37). You be blessed gentleman! I shall go back from where I have come; all my wishes have been fulfilled! I have nothing to think twice about (38). Oh son! [Please refer verse nos. 23-25.] The Gods are my subordinates. As Brahma has advised me, I should certainly remain vigilant and do the work of the Gods using my Maya (delusory powers and cosmic energy), whenever the need arises' (39).

एवं तयोः कथयतोर्दुर्वासा मुनिरभ्यगात्। राजद्वारं राघवस्य दर्शनापेक्षया द्रुतम्॥ 40॥
मुनिर्लक्ष्मणमासाद्य दुर्वासा वाक्यमब्रवीत्। शीघ्रं दर्शय रामं मे कार्यं मेऽत्यन्तमाहितम्॥ 41॥

evaṃ tayoḥ kathayatordurvāsā munirabhyagāt/
rājadvāraṃ rāghavasya darśanāpekṣayā drutam//

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munirlakṣmaṇamāsādya durvāsā vākyamabravīt /
śīghraṃ darśaya rāmaṃ me kāryaṃ me'tyantamāhitam //

While they were talking in this way, sage Durbasa came hurriedly to the palace gate to have an urgent meeting with Sri Ram (40). He went to Laxman (who was guarding the gate) and said urgently, 'Let me meet Sri Ram immediately because I have an urgent work with him. I can't wait and I have to see him immediately without any delay (41).

तच्छ्रुत्वा प्राह सौमित्रिर्मुनिं ज्वलनतेजसम्। रामेण कार्यं किं तेऽद्य किं तेऽभीष्टं करोम्यहम्॥ 42॥
राजा कार्यान्तरे व्यग्रो मुहूर्तं सम्प्रतीक्ष्यताम्। तच्छ्रुत्वा क्रोधसन्तप्तो मुनिः सौमित्रिमब्रवीत्॥ 43॥
अस्मिन् क्षणे तु सौमित्रे ने दर्शयसि चेद्विभुम्। रामं सविषयं वंशं भस्मीकुर्यां न संशयः॥ 44॥

tacchrutvā prāha saumitrirmuniṃ jvalanatejasam /
rāmeṇa kāryaṃ kiṃ te'dya kiṃ te'bhīṣṭaṃ karomyaham //
rājā kāryāntare vyagro muhūrtaṃ sampratīkṣyatām /
tacchrutvā krodhasantapto muniḥ saumitrimabravīt //
asmin kṣaṇe tu saumitre na darśayasi cedvibhum /
rāmaṃ saviṣayaṃ vaṃśaṃ bhasmīkuryāṃ na saṃśayaḥ //

Hearing this, the son of Sumitra (Laxman) asked the sage whose radiance resembled the glow of fire, 'What work do you have with Sri Ram now? What is your wish? I will fulfill it myself (42). As it happens, at present the king (Sri Ram) is busy with some other work, so please wait for some time (literally, for one Muhurt = 1 hour and 48 minutes; but here meaning a short while)'. As soon as he (sage Durbasa) heard it, he became vehemently furious and agitated with anger; he literally flew into a rage and became tormented and miserable with anger, and wrathfully said to the son of Sumitra (Laxman) (43), 'Oh Saumitre! If you do not let me meet Lord Ram immediately, there is no doubt that I shall burn to ashes both your clan as well as your country' (44).

श्रुत्वा तद्वचनं घोरमृषेर्दुर्वाससो भृशम्। स्वरूपं तस्य वाक्यस्य चिन्तयित्वा स लक्ष्मणः॥ 45॥
सर्वनाशाद्वरं मेऽद्य नाशो ह्येकस्य कारणात्। निश्चित्यैवं ततो गत्वा रामाय प्राह लक्ष्मणः॥ 46॥

śrutvā tadvacanaṃ ghoramṛṣerdurvāsaso bhṛśam /
svarūpaṃ tasya vākyasya cintayitvā sa lakṣmaṇaḥ //
sarvanāśādvaraṃ me'dya nāśo hyekasya kāraṇāt /
niścityaivaṃ tato gatvā rāmāya prāha lakṣmaṇaḥ //

Hearing these fierce words full of curse from the sage, Laxman

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reflected over the consequences of defying them and decided that it was better part of discretion that he dies alone in comparison to the annihilation of all. So, having decided to die instead of letting the whole clan and kingdom be wiped out due to the curse of the sage, he decided the meet Sri Ram instead, and he went inside to see him and told him everything (45-46).

सौमित्रेर्वचनं श्रुत्वा रामः कालं व्यसर्जयत्। शीघ्रं निर्गम्य रामोऽपि ददर्शात्रेः सुतं मुनिम्।। 47।।
रामोऽभिवाद्य सम्प्रीतो मुनिं पप्रच्छ सादरम्। किं कार्यं ते करोमीति मुनिमाह रघूत्तमः।। 48।।

saumitrervacanaṃ śrutvā rāmaḥ kālaṃ vyasarjayat /
śīghraṃ nirgamya rāmo'pi dadarśātreḥ sutaṃ munim //
rāmo'bhivādya samprīto muniṃ papraccha sādaram /
kiṃ kāryaṃ te karomīti munimāha raghūttamaḥ //

Hearing these words of Laxman, the son of Sumitra, Sri Ram took leave of Kaal and came out soon to meet sage Durbasa, the son of sage Atri (47). The most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram) bowed before him and asked him affectionately and respectfully, 'Oh sage! What can I do for you?' (48).

तच्छ्रुत्वा रामवचनं दुर्वासा राममब्रवीत्। अद्य वर्षसहस्राणामुपवाससमापनम्।। 49।।
अतो भोजनमिच्छामि सिद्धं यत्ते रघूत्तम। रामो मुनिवचः श्रुत्वा सन्तोषेण समन्वितः।। 50।।
स सिद्धमन्नं मुनये यथावत्समुपाहरत्। मुनिर्भुक्त्वान्नममृतं सन्तुष्टः पुनरभ्यगात्।। 51।।

tacchrutvā rāmavacanaṃ durvāsā rāmamabravīt /
adya varṣa sahasrāṇāmupavāsasamāpanam //
ato bhojanamicchāmi siddhaṃ yatte raghūttama /
rāmo munivacaḥ śrutvā santoṣeṇa samanvitaḥ //
sa siddhamannaṃ munaye yathāvatsamupāharat /
munirbhuktvānnamamṛtaṃ santuṣṭaḥ punarabhyagāt //

Hearing these respectful words of Sri Ram, Durbasa said, 'Today I have ended my fast lasting for one thousand years (49). Hence, oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram), I want to partake the food that has been prepared at your palace'.

Hearing these words of the sage, Sri Ram felt happy and satisfied, and he offered him properly cooked and delicious food. The sage ate that meal—which was as delectable and rejuvenating as Amrit (elixir of life)—with relish, and feeling extremely satisfied, he went his way (50-51).

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स्वमाश्रमं गते तस्मिन् रामः सस्मार भाषितम्। कालेन शोकदुःखार्तो विमनाश्चाति विह्वलः।। 52।।
अवाङ्मुखो दीनमना न शशाकाभिभाषितुम्। मनसा लक्ष्मणं ज्ञात्वा हतप्रायं रघूद्वहः।।53।।

svamāśramaṃ gate tasmin rāmaḥ sasmāra bhāṣitam /
kālena śokaduḥkhārto vimanāścāti vihvalaḥ //
avāṅmukho dīnamanā na śaśākābhibhāṣitum /
manasā lakṣmaṇaṃ jñātvā hataprāyaṃ raghūdvahaḥ //

52-53. When the sage (Durbasa) had gone back to his hermitage, Sri Ram remembered the words of promise that he had given to Kaal (see verse nos. 18-19). This caused great mental agony, distress, dismay, dilemma and consternation to him; he felt devastated and confounded as well as distraught, perturbed and remorseful (52). Sri Ram—who is like a crown jewel in the clan of Raghu—decided/ determined in his heart that Laxman was as good as dead for him. But he could not gather enough courage to say anything to Laxman in this regard, but sat gloomily with a bowed head, lost in deep thought (53).

अवाङ्मुखो बभूवाथ तूष्णीमेवाखिलेश्वरः। ततो रामं विलोक्याह सौमित्रिर्दुःखसम्प्लुतम्।। 54।।
तूष्णीम्भूतं चिन्तयन्तं गर्हन्तं स्नेहबन्धनम्। मत्कृते त्यज सन्तापं जहि मां रघुनन्दन।। 55।।

avāṅmukho babhūvātha tūṣṇīmevākhileśvaraḥ /
tato rāmaṃ vilokyāha saumitrirduḥkhasamplutam //
tūṣṇīmbhūtaṃ cintayantaṃ garhantaṃ snehabandhanam /
matkṛte tyaja santāpaṃ jahi māṃ raghunandana //

54-55. The Lord of the whole creation sat quietly in a pensive, melancholic and forlorn mood, brooding gravely with a lowered head. Seeing Sri Ram immersed in sorrows, remorsefully silent, contrite, worried and on the horns of a dilemma, and literally torn apart between his vows of being true to his words and the ties of fraternity and brotherhood, Laxman (who had sensed the reason for the Lord's vexations) said, 'Oh Raghunandan (Sri Ram)! Do not lament for me, and kill me immediately instead (54-55).

गतिः कालस्य कलिता पूर्वमेवेदृशी प्रभो। त्वयि हीनप्रतिज्ञे तु नरको मे ध्रुवं भवेत्।। 56।।
मयि प्रीतिर्यदि भवेद्यद्यनुग्राह्यता तव। त्यक्त्वा शङ्कां जहि प्राज्ञ मा मा धर्मं त्यज प्रभो।। 57।।

gatiḥ kālasya kalitā pūrvamevedṛśī prabho /
tvayi hīnapratijñe tu narako me dhruvaṃ bhavet //
mayi prītiryadi bhavedyadyanugrāhyatā tava /
tyaktvā śaṅkāṃ jahi prājña mā mā dharmaṃ tyaja prabho //

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Oh Lord! I have already decided it. This is destined for me. If you break your vows (see verse nos. 18-19), it is indeed true that I shall have to suffer in hell (because I am the cause for which you have to do the unthinkable, that is, acting against your vows or going back on your words) (56). Hence, if you indeed have affection for me and I am worthy of your kindness, mercy, affection, brotherly love and goodwill, then oh the wise one, leave aside procrastination and kill me immediately. Oh Lord! Do not forsake Dharma (i.e. the path of righteousness and noble conduct). [That is, you must keep your words that you have given to Kaal. So you must kill me because I have violated the terms you had decided with Kaal before you began talking with him, and I have disturbed you while you were closeted with him.]' (57).

सौमित्रिणोक्तं तच्छ्रुत्वा रामश्चलितमानसः। आहूय मन्त्रिणः सर्वान् वसिष्ठं चेदमब्रवीत्॥ 58॥
मुनेरागमनं यत्तु कालस्यापि हि भाषितम्। प्रतिज्ञामात्मनश्चैव सर्वमावेदयत्प्रभुः॥ 59॥

saumitriṇoktaṃ tacchrutvā rāmaścalitamānasaḥ /
āhūya mantriṇaḥ sarvān vasiṣṭhaṃ cedamabravīt //
munerāgamanaṃ yattu kālasyāpi hi bhāṣitam /
pratijñāmātmanaścaiva sarvamāvedayatprabhuḥ //

58-59. Hearing these words of Laxman, Sri Ram's mind was torn between the devil and the deep sea, and he became extremely distressed, dismayed and anguished, perplexed and perturbed. He summoned all his ministers and narrated the entire episode to his Guru Vashistha (58). The Lord (Sri Ram) told him all about the arrival of sage Durbasa, the talk he had with Kaal and his vows (59).

श्रुत्वा रामस्य वचनं मन्त्रिणः सपुरोहिताः। ऊचुः प्राञ्जलयः सर्वे राममक्लिष्टकारिणम्॥ 60॥
पूर्वमेव हि निर्दिष्टं तव भूभारहारिणः। लक्ष्मणेन वियोगस्ते ज्ञातो विज्ञानचक्षुषा॥ 61॥

śrutvā rāmasya vacanaṃ mantriṇaḥ sapurohitāḥ /
ūcuḥ prāñjalayaḥ sarve rāmamakliṣṭakāriṇam //
pūrvameva hi nirdiṣṭaṃ tava bhūbhārahāriṇaḥ /
lakṣmaṇena viyogaste jñāto vijñānacakṣuṣā //

60-61. Hearing everything from Sri Ram, the royal priest (Vashistha) and the ministers (consulted amongst themselves and) said with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined as a mark of submission and prayer to Sri Ram who can do everything, even the most daunting

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and formidable ones, without making any effort (i.e. he can do everything very easily) (60), 'We have already learnt through our eyes of insight, foresight and wisdom that it is so destined that you—who are the one who has removed the burden (in the shape of the cruel and savage demons) of the earth—will have to suffer the anguish and sorrows of separation from Laxman (61).

त्यजाशु लक्ष्मणं राम मा प्रतिज्ञां त्यज प्रभो। प्रतिज्ञाते परित्यक्ते धर्मो भवति निष्फलः॥ 62॥
धर्मे नष्टेऽखिले राम त्रैलोक्यं नश्यति ध्रुवम्। त्वं तु सर्वस्य लोकस्य पालकोऽसि रघूत्तम्॥ 63॥

tyajāśu lakṣmaṇaṃ rāma mā pratijñāṃ tyaja prabho /
pratijñāte parityakte dharmo bhavati niṣphalaḥ //
dharme naṣṭe'khile rāma trailokyaṃ naśyati dhruvam /
tvaṃ tu sarvasya lokasya pālako'si raghūttama //

Hence, oh Sri Ram, you should leave Laxman forthwith. Oh Lord! You must not break your promise (made to Kaal in verse nos. 18-19), because by going back on one's words, the very basis of Dharma (righteousness, probity, propriety, noble and virtuous conduct, ethics, morality et al) is defeated or countermanded (62). And, oh Sri Ram, when the Dharma is destroyed, it is certainly calamitous for the three worlds (celestial, terrestrial and subterranean; i.e. the entire creation). Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! You are the saviour and sustainer of all the Lokas (worlds) (63).

त्वक्त्वा लक्ष्मणमेवैकं त्रैलोक्यं त्रातुमर्हसि। रामो धर्मार्थसहितं वाक्यं तेषामनिन्दितम्॥ 64॥
सभामध्ये समाश्रुत्य प्राह सौमित्रिमञ्जसा। यथेष्टं गच्छ सौमित्रे मा भूद्धर्मस्य संशयः॥ 65॥

tyaktvā lakṣmaṇamevaikaṃ trailokyaṃ trātumarhasi /
rāmo dharmārthasahitaṃ vākyaṃ teṣāmaninditam //
sabhāmadhye samāśrutya prāha saumitrimañjasā /
yatheṣṭaṃ gaccha saumitre mā bhūddharmasya saṃśayaḥ //

So, you must prefer to leave Laxman and thereby protect the entire Triloki (3 worlds)[1]'.

Hearing their wise words of faultless logic and wisdom, Sri Ram immediately said to Laxman, 'Oh Laxman! Go to any place you wish to go so that there is no obstacle in the path of Dharma (64-65).

[Note—[1]Because, it is better to sacrifice one individual when the other options are horribly unthinkable; that is, when the very existence of the whole world based on Dharma is at stake. If Sri Ram, who is the

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embodiment and upholder of the flag of Dharma, goes back on his own words or promises, then this will create a very bad precedent for the world.]

परित्यागो वधो वापि सतामेवोभयं समम्। एवमुक्ते रघुश्रेष्ठे दुःखव्याकुलितेक्षणः।। 66।।
रामं प्रणम्य सौमित्रिः शीघ्रं गृहमगात्स्वकम्। ततोऽगात्सरयूतीरमाचम्य स कृताञ्जलिः।। 67।।
नव द्वाराणि संयम्य मूर्ध्नि प्राणमधारयत्। यदक्षरं परं ब्रह्म वासुदेवाख्यमव्ययम्।। 68।।

parityāgo vadho vāpi satāmevobhayaṃ samam /
evamukte raghuśreṣṭhe duḥkhavyākulitekṣaṇaḥ //
rāmaṃ praṇamya saumitriḥ śīghraṃ gṛhamagātsvakam /
tato'gātsarayūtīramācamya sa kṛtāñjaliḥ //
nava dvārāṇi saṃyamya mūrdhni prāṇamadhārayat /
yadakṣaraṃ paraṃ brahma vāsudevākhyamavyayam //

For noble, upright and righteous persons, leaving (abandoning) one's near and dear ones is as good as killing them'. Hearing these stern and emotionless words of the most exalted Raghu (Sri Ram), Laxman was crestfallen and devastated; he felt most distraught and dejected, and was overwhelmed with anguish and sorrows; tears of utter dismay, great pain and deep anguish welled up in his eyes (66). He bowed to Sri Ram and came to his own palace immediately. From there, he went to the banks of river Saryu, sipped some water with his palms, bent his hands at the elbows and joined his palms reverentially (67), stopped the functioning of, or literally closed all his nine doors representing his sense organs[1], and concentrated his 'Pran' (vital wind of life) into his head[2]. He focused his attention on the supreme transcendental Brahm who is imperishable and eternal, and who is known as Vasudeo (or Vishnu) (68).

[Note—[1]The nine 'doors of the body' are the avenues through which the creature receives external stimuli, performs chief bodily functions and interacts with the world. These are two ears, two eyes, two nostrils, mouth, anus and urino-genital opening.

[2]This is a Yogic process whereby the Yogis or ascetics concentrate their life force in the head in the area called the 'Brahm Randhra', from where they can either revert back to ordinary life, or make their exit from the body by either splitting the skull and allowing the Pran to escape through the split, or through the opening of the nostrils.]

पदं तत्परमं धाम चेतसा सोऽभ्यचिन्तयत्। वायुरोधेन संयुक्तं सर्वे देवाः सहर्षयः।। 69।।
साग्नयो लक्ष्मणं पुष्पैस्तुष्टुवुश्च समाकिरन्। अदृश्यं विबुधैः कैश्चित्सशरीरं च वासवः।। 70।।

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गृहीत्वा लक्ष्मणं शक्रः स्वर्गलोकमथागमत्। ततो विष्णोश्चतुर्भागं तं देवं सुरसत्तमाः।
सर्वे देवर्षयो दृष्ट्वा लक्ष्मणं समपूजयन्।। 71।।

padaṃ tatparamaṃ dhāma cetasā so'bhyacintayat /
vāyurodhena saṃyuktaṃ sarve devāḥ saharṣayaḥ //
sāgnayo lakṣmaṇaṃ puṣpaistuṣṭuvuśca samākiran /
adṛśyaṃ vibudhaiḥ kaiścitsaśarīraṃ ca vāsavaḥ //
gṛhītvā lakṣmaṇaṃ śakraḥ svargalokamathāgamat /
tato viṣṇoścaturbhāgaṃ taṃ devaṃ surasattamāḥ /
sarve devarṣayo dṛṣṭvā lakṣmaṇaṃ samapūjayan //

Then he focused his attention (i.e. meditated) upon the supreme destination for all the creatures, and sub-consciously realised its presence in his mind and intellect. This ultimate abode for all the enlightened and realised ones is called the abode of Vasudeo; it is characterised by being eternal, stable, unchanging and immutable, one without a beginning or end, one that is limitless, is indestructible and imperishable.

In this way, when Laxman had voluntarily and cheerfully exerted control over his vital life giving wind (i.e. when he had adopted the meditation procedure whereby an ascetic stops the vital functions of his body, concentrates his vital winds into his head, and prepares to make his exit from the body in the form of his Pran, and leave behind the gross body just like a snake abandons its cuticle) (69), the sages, hermits and the Fire God as well as the Gods in heaven showered flowers on him most delightedly; they lavished praise on him. Just at that time Indra, the king of Gods, took Laxman bodily to the heavens stealthily so that no other God could see him being brought up. Seeing Laxman, who symbolically represented one fourth part of Lord Vishnu, all the Gods and celestial ascetics, sages, hermits and saints worshipped and adored him (70-71).

लक्ष्मणे हि दिवमागते हरौ सिद्धलोकगतयोगिनस्तदा।
ब्रह्मणा सह समागमन्मुदा द्रष्टुमाहितमहाहिरूपकम्।। 72।।

lakṣmaṇe hi divamagate harau siddhalokagatayoginastadā /
brahmaṇā saha samāgamanmudā draṣṭumāhitamahāhirūpakam //

When Lord Laxman had ascended to the heavens, Brahma (the creator), accompanied by all the celestial ascetics, sages, saints and hermits who are residents in the Siddha Loka (literally, the abode

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where mystics and the attained ones reside), came to him, full of delight and exhilaration, to have a divine, holy and auspicious vision of that supreme legendary serpent in the form of Laxman, and to pay their profound obeisance to him (72).

***

Uttar Kand — Canto 9

Epilogue

The great and final exit (Mahaprayaan) (महाप्रयाण)

श्रीमहादेव उवाच

लक्ष्मणं तु परित्यज्य रामो दुःखसमन्वितः। मन्त्रिणो नैगमांश्चैव वसिष्ठं चेदमब्रवीत्।। 1।।
अभिषेक्ष्यामि भरतमधिराज्ये महामतिम्। अद्य चाहं गमिष्यामि लक्ष्मणस्य पदानुगः।। 2।।

śrīmahādeva uvāca

lakṣmaṇaṃ tu parityajya rāmo duḥkhasamanvitaḥ /
mantriṇo naigamāṃścaiva vasiṣṭhaṃ cedamabravīt //
abhiṣekṣyāmi bharatamadhirājye mahāmatim /
adya cāhaṃ gamiṣyāmi lakṣmaṇasya padānugaḥ //

Lord Shiva said—'Oh Parvati! Having abandoned Laxman, Sri Ram was overwhelmed with extreme anguish and remorse, and he said to his ministers who were experts in Vedas and to his Guru Vashistha (1), 'I will anoint the wise Bharat on the throne and follow the footsteps of Laxman today' (2).

[Note :—Previously, Sri Ram had made Laxman the crown prince of Ayodhya in Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse 26. This verse marks the profundity of Sri Ram's anguish and sorrow upon his separation from his beloved brother who had suffered so much for him in the forest and had shared his misfortunes shoulder to shoulder.]

एवमुक्ते रघुश्रेष्ठे पौरजानपदास्तदा। द्रुमा इवच्छिन्नमूला दुःखार्ता पतिता भुवि।। 3।।
मूर्च्छितो भरतो वापि श्रुत्वा रामाभिभाषितम्। गर्हयामास राज्यं स प्राहेदं रामसन्निधौ।। 4।।

evamukte raghuśreṣṭhe paurajānapadāstadā /
drumā ivacchinnamūlā duḥkhārtāḥ patitā bhuvi //
mūrcchito bharato vāpi śrutvā rāmābhibhāṣitam /
garhayāmāsa rājyaṃ sa prāhedaṃ rāmasannidhau //

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When the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram) said so, the denizens of the city as well as the subjects of the large realm were so overcome with shock and grief that they fell to the ground unconscious like a tree cut from its roots (3). Bharat too fainted on hearing what Sri Ram had just said. He criticised the decision of handing the kingdom to him and showed his firm disinclination to accept the throne, saying (4)—

सत्येन च शपे नाहं त्वां विना दिवि वा भुवि। काङ्क्षे राज्यं रघुश्रेष्ठ शपे त्वत्पादयोः प्रभो।। 5।।
इमौ कुशलवौ राजन्नभिषिञ्चस्व राघव। कोशलेषु कुशं वीरमुत्तरेषु लवं तथा।। 6।।

satyena ca śape nāhaṃ tvāṃ vinā divi vā bhuvi/
kāṅkṣe rājyaṃ raghuśreṣṭha śape tvatpādayoḥ prabho//
imau kuśalavau rājannabhiṣiñcasva rāghava/
kośaleṣu kuśaṃ vīramuttareṣu lavaṃ tathā//

'Oh the most exalted of the Raghus (Sri Ram)! I swear in the name of truth and say on oath by touching your feet (i.e. I say most truthfully) that, oh Lord, I do not desire to have the kingdom of either the heaven or the earth without you (5). Oh Raghav (Sri Ram)! Anoint these two boys Lav and Kush on the throne—make the brave Kush (the elder brother) the king of Ayodhya and Lav the king of the territory to the north of it (6).

[Note :—Chart depicting the heirs of Dashrath and their kingdom is appended separately at the end of this Canto.]

गच्छन्तु दूतास्त्वरितं शत्रुघ्नानयनाय हि। अस्माकमेतद्गमनं स्वर्वासाय शृणोतु सः।। 7।।
भरतेनोदितं श्रुत्वा पतितास्ताः समीक्ष्य तम्। प्रजाश्च भयसंविग्ना रामविश्लेषकातराः।। 8।।

gacchantu dūtāstvaritaṃ śatrughnānayanāya hi/
asmākametadgamanaṃ svarvāsāya śṛṇotu saḥ//
bharatenoditaṃ śrutvā patitāstāḥ samīkṣya tam/
prajāśca bhayasaṃvignā rāmaviśleṣakātarāḥ//

Messengers should be dispatched to Shatrughan (who was earlier appointed king of Mathura by Sri Ram in Uttar Kand, Canto 6, verse no. 16) to bring him here so that he becomes aware of our going (i.e. hears of our decision to go) to the heavens' (7).

Hearing the words of Bharat and seeing him firmly determined to follow Sri Ram, all the subjects of the kingdom became scared (of the consequences) and fainted to the ground (8).

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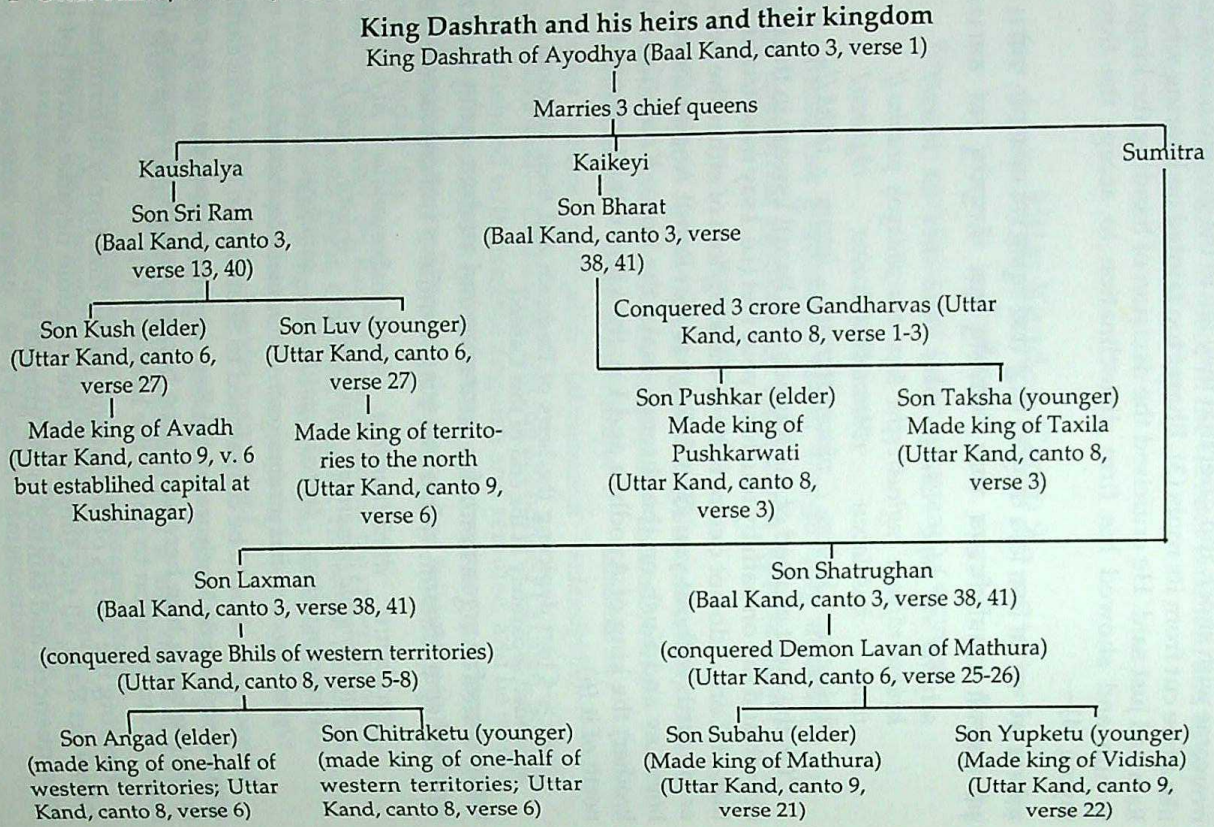
1- Uttar Kand, Canto 9, verse no. 6



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वसिष्ठो भगवान् राममुवाच सदयं वचः। पश्य तातादरात्सर्वाः पतिता भूतले प्रजाः।। 9।।
तासां भावानुगं राम प्रसादं कर्तुमर्हसि। श्रुत्वा वसिष्ठवचनं ताः समुत्थाप्य पूज्य च।। 10।।
सस्नेहो रघुनाथस्ताः किं करोमीति चाब्रवीत्। ततः प्राञ्जलयः प्रोचुः प्रजा भक्त्या रघूद्वहम्।। 11।।

vasiṣṭho bhagavān rāmamuvāca sadayaṃ vacaḥ/
paśya tātādarātsarvāḥ patitā bhūtale prajāḥ//
tāsāṃ bhāvānugaṃ rāma prasādaṃ kartumarhasi/
śrutvā vasiṣṭhavacanaṃ tāḥ samutthāpya pūjya ca//
sasneho raghunāthastāḥ kiṃ karomīti cābravīt/
tataḥ prāñjalayaḥ procuḥ prajā bhaktyā raghūdvaham//

Then Vashistha said words full of compassion to Lord Ram, 'Oh dear son! All the subjects of the kingdom are lying on the ground. Look at them compassionately and benevolently (9). Oh Sri Ram, you must show mercy and munificence on them in consonance with their great affection for you'. Hearing these words of advise from sage Vashistha, he (Sri Ram) lifted all of them, showed respect to them (10), and asked them most affectionately, 'Say, what I can do for you?' Then the members of the public (i.e. his subjects) told him devotionally with hands bent at the elbows and palms joined together as a mark of submission and prayer (11)—

गन्तुमिच्छसि यत्र त्वमनुगच्छमहे वयम्। अस्माकमेषा परमा प्रीतिर्धर्मोऽयमक्षयः।। 12।।
तवानुगमने राम हृद्गता नो दृढा मतिः। पुत्रदारादिभिः सार्धमनुयामोऽद्य सर्वथा।। 13।।
तपोवनं वा स्वर्गं वा पुरं वा रघुनन्दन। ज्ञात्वा तेषां मनोदार्ढ्यं कालस्य वचनं तथा।। 14।।
भक्तं पौरजनं चैव बाढमित्याह राघवः। कृत्वैवं निश्चयं रामस्तस्मिन्नेवाहनि प्रभुः।। 15।।
प्रस्थापयामास च तौ रामभद्रः कुशीलवौ। अष्टौ रथसहस्राणि सहस्रं चैव दन्तिनाम्।। 16।।
षष्टिं चाश्वसहस्राणामेकैकस्मै ददौ बलम्। बहुरत्नौ बहुधनौ हृष्टपुष्टजनावृतौ।। 17।।

gantumicchasi yatra tvamanugacchāmahe vayam/
asmākameṣā paramā prītirdharmo'yamakṣayaḥ//
tavānugamane rāma hṛdgatā no dṛḍhā matiḥ/
putradārādibhiḥ sārdhamanuyāmo'dya sarvathā//
tapovanaṃ vā svargaṃ vā puraṃ vā raghunandana/
jñātvā teṣāṃ manodārḍhyaṃ kālasya vacanaṃ tathā//
bhaktaṃ paurajanaṃ caiva bāḍhamityāha rāghavaḥ/
kṛtyaivaṃ niścayaṃ rāmastasminnevāhani prabhuḥ//
prasthāpayāmāsa ca tau rāmabhadraḥ kuśīlavau/
aṣṭau rathasahasrāṇi sahasraṃ caiva dantināṃ//

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ṣaṣṭiṃ cāśvasahasrāṇāmekaikasmai dadau balam /
bahuratnau bahudhanau hṛṣṭapuṣṭajanāvṛtau //

'We will also follow you wherever you wish to go. Therein lies our greatest happiness and it is our eternal duty (i.e. Dharma) (12). Oh Sri Ram! It is our firm determination (i.e. we have made up our mind and heart) to follow you. We shall follow you with our children and wives (i.e. whole families) (13) to the Tapovan (i.e. the forest where austerities and penances are done), the city, the heavens or anywhere else you wish to go'. Then realising that they were firm in their resolve, and also remembering (i.e. recalling) the words of Kaal (14), Sri Ram gave his consent to those devoted subjects by saying 'alright'. Having decided so, Lord Ram sent Kush and Lav to their respective kingdoms. Each of them were given eight thousand chariots, one thousand elephants (15-16), sixty thousand horses, a lot of gems, jewels and wealth as well as healthy people to accompany them to populate their new kingdoms (17).

[Note—This is a very significant verse. It implies that, inter alia, not each and every one in the vast kingdom of Ayodhya accompanied the Lord to the heaven, and though Bharat had clearly said that Kush should be anointed on the throne of Ayodhya, Sri Ram 'sent the two brothers to their respective kingdoms', which means some where else other than Ayodhya, because it is absurd to send Kush to Ayodhya if he was already at Ayodhya. This proves that Kush established another kingdom which was different from where his father ruled. The reason is that all the citizens of Ayodhya had kept their vows and left the city desolate when the Lord left it. The ones who accompanied Kush and Lav were the subjects of the broader realm, for Ayodhya was not merely a city state but a huge kingdom stretching far and wide. Those who were in close proximity of Sri Ram at Ayodhya, whose children had played with the Lord during their childhoods, were more emotionally attached to him than the people who lived in distant places; this is natural and obvious. Besides this, Ayodhya was cursed, and the Lord made it so happen that the place perishes with him, leaving no trace of its earlier sad episodes to make Kush and Luv emotionally upset in the future, because had Kush lived here, the bitter memories of his mother Sita being subjected to horrors of public censor would have haunted him for ever. Perhaps, this is the reason why the Lord assigned him a kingdom away from Ayodhya. See note to verse no.67 below.]

अभिवाद्य गतौ रामं कृच्छ्रेण तु कुशीलवौ। शत्रुघ्नानयने दूतान्प्रेषयामास राघवः॥ 18॥
ते दूतास्त्वरितं गत्वा शत्रुघ्नाय न्यवेदयन्। कालस्यागमनं पश्चादत्रिपुत्रस्य चेष्टितम्॥ 19॥

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लक्ष्मणस्य च निर्याणं प्रतिज्ञां राघवस्य च। पुत्राभिषेचनं चैव सर्वं रामचिकीर्षितम्।। 20।।

abhivādya gatau rāmaṃ kṛcchreṇa tu kuśīlavau /
śatrughnānayane dūtānpreṣayāmāsa rāghavaḥ //
te dūtāstvaritaṃ gatvā śatrughnāya nyavedayan /
kālasyāgamanaṃ paścādatriputrasya ceṣṭitam //
lakṣmaṇasya ca niryāṇaṃ pratijñāṃ rāghavasya ca /
putrābhiṣecanaṃ caiva sarvaṃ rāmacikīrṣitam //

Kush and Lav had great difficulty in taking their leave from Sri Ram, but they reconciled themselves to their fate, bowed before him and left gracefully. Just about that time, Sri Ram sent messengers to call Shatrughan (18).

Those messengers immediately went to Shatrughan and narrated to him all the happenings at Ayodhya—the arrival of Kaal, the tantrums of Durbasa, Laxman's exit from the world, Sri Ram's stern vows, anointment of his sons (Lav and Kush) on the throne, and his next course of action (19-20).

श्रुत्वा तद् दूतवचनं शत्रुघ्नः कुलनाशनम्। व्यथितोऽपि धृतिं लब्ध्वा पुत्रावाहूय सत्वरः।
अभिषिच्य सुबाहुं वै मथुरायां महाबलः।। 21।।
यूपकेतुं च विदिशानगरे शत्रुसूदनः। अयोध्यां त्वरितं प्रागात्स्वयं रामदिदृक्षया।। 22।।

śrutvā tad dūtavacanaṃ śtrughnaḥ kulanāśanam /
vyathito'pi dhṛtiṃ labdhvā putrāvāhūya satvaraḥ /
abhiṣicya subāhuṃ vai mathurāyāṃ mahābalaḥ //
yūpaketuṃ ca vidiśānagare śatrusūdanaḥ /
ayodhyāṃ tvaritaṃ prāgātsvayaṃ rāmadidṛkṣayā //

Hearing about the disintegration of his clan from the messengers, Shatrughan was crestfallen and devastated; he felt very remorseful, extremely sorry and overwhelmingly anguished. But he soon managed to recover his composure and summoned his two sons. Out of them, he anointed (the elder son) the most valorous and valiant Subahu on the throne of Mathura, and (his younger brother) Yupketu on the throne of Vidisha. Thereafter, he swiftly made his departure for Ayodhya to meet Sri Ram (21-22).

ददर्श च महात्मानं तेजसा ज्वलनप्रभम्। दुकूलयुगसंवीतं ऋषिभिश्चाक्षयैर्वृतम्।। 23।।
अभिवाद्य रमानाथं शत्रुघ्नो रघुपुङ्गवम्। प्राञ्जलिर्धर्मसहितं वाक्यं प्राह महामतिः।। 24।।

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dadarśa ca mahātmānaṃ tejasā jvalanaprabham /
dukūlayugasaṃvītaṃ ṛṣibhiścākṣayairvṛtam //
abhivādya ramānāthaṃ śatrughnau raghupuṅgavam /
prāñjalirdharmasahitaṃ vākyaṃ prāha mahāmatiḥ //

Reaching there (Ayodhya), he found the great and noble Sri Ram—who was radiant like the glow of a divine fire—dressed in a garment consisting of two pieces of cloth and surrounded by sages, seers, hermits and saints who had a long life (23).

The wise Shatrughan showed his respects to Sri Ram who is the Lord of Laxmi as well as the best in the clan of Raghu. He folded his hands at the elbows, and joining his palms in reverence he said these words of firm determination and infused with righteousness (24)—

अभिषिच्य सुतौ तत्र राज्ये राजीवलोचन। तवानुगमने राजन्विद्धि मां कृतनिश्चयम्।। 25।।
त्यक्तुं नार्हसि मां वीर भक्तं तव विशेषतः। शत्रुघ्नस्य दृढां बुद्धिं विज्ञाय रघुनन्दनः।। 26।।
सज्जीभवतु मध्याह्ने भवानित्यब्रवीद्वचः। अथ क्षणात्समुत्पेतुर्वानराः कामरूपिणः।। 27।।
ऋक्षाश्च राक्षसाश्चैव गोपुच्छाश्च सहस्रशः। ऋषीणां देवतानां च पुत्रा रामस्य निर्गमम्।। 28।।
श्रुत्वा प्रोचू रघुश्रेष्ठं सर्वे वानरराक्षसाः। तवानुगमने विद्धि निश्चितार्थान्हि नः प्रभो।। 29।।

abhiṣicya sutau tatra rājye rājīvalocana /
tavānugamane rājanviddhi māṃ kṛtaniścayam //
tyaktuṃ nārhasi māṃ vīra bhaktaṃ tava viśeṣataḥ /
śatrughnasya dṛḍhāṃ buddhiṃ vijñāya raghunandanaḥ //
sajjibhavatu madhyāhne bhavānityabravīdvacaḥ /
atha kṣaṇātsamutpeturvānarāḥ kāmarūpiṇaḥ //
ṛkṣāśca rākṣasāścaiva gopucchāśca sahasraśaḥ /
ṛṣīṇāṃ devatānāṃ ca putrā rāmasya nirgamam //
śrutvā procū raghuśreṣṭhaṃ sarve vānararākṣasāḥ /
tavānugamane viddhi niścitārthānhi naḥ prabho //

'Oh the one with lotus-like eyes. I have anointed my two sons on the throne before I came here. Now I have also decided to follow you—you must know it (25).

Oh the brave one! I am your ardent follower (devotee). Hence, you must not forsake me'. Realising that Shatrughan is firm in his resolve, Raghunanda (Sri Ram) said to him, 'Get ready by the afternoon (see verse no.37)'. Right at that moment, all the monkeys, including those with a cow-like long tail (i.e. black-faced Langoors) (i.e. the companions of Sugriv), the bears (under the leadership of Jamvant),

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the demons (who had accompanied Vibhishan)—all of whom who could assume any form and shape they wished—came there in their thousands. All of them were the sons of different sages, hermits and Gods (i.e. they were born of them to serve the Lord), and learning about Sri Ram's final departure from this mortal, mundane, delusory and artificial world, they said to him, 'Oh Lord! You must regard us also as being determined to follow you' (26-29).

एतस्मिन्नन्तरे रामं सुग्रीवोऽपि महाबलः। यथावदभिवाद्याह राघवं भक्तवत्सलम्।। 30।।
अभिषिच्याङ्गदं राज्ये आगतोऽस्मि महाबलम्। तवानुगमने राम विद्धि मां कृतनिश्चयम्।। 31।।

etasminnantare rāmaṃ sugrīvo'pi mahābalaḥ /
yathāvadabhivādyāha rāghavaṃ bhaktavatsalam //
abhiṣicyāṅgadaṃ rājye āgato'smi mahābalam /
tavānugamane rāma viddhi māṃ kṛtaniścayam //

At that instant, the most strong and valorous Sugriv duly bowed before Raghav (Sri Ram) who is endearing, benevolent and munificent towards his devotees. Sugriv said (30), 'Oh Sri Ram! I have anointed the valiant and valorous Angad on the throne (of Kishkindha) before coming here, and have determined to follow you—you must become aware of it (i.e. of my decision)' (31).

श्रुत्वा तेषां दृढं वाक्यं ऋक्षवानररक्षसाम्। विभीषणमुवाचेदं वचनं मृदु सादरम्।। 32।।
धरिष्यति धरा यावत्प्रजास्तावत्प्रशाधि मे। वचनाद्राक्षसं राज्यं शापितोऽसि ममोपरि।। 33।।

śrutvā teṣāṃ dṛḍhaṃ vākyaṃ ṛkṣavānararakṣasām /
vibhīṣaṇamuvācedaṃ vacanaṃ mṛdu sādaram //
dhariṣyati dharā yāvatprajāstāvatpraśādhi me /
vacanādrākṣasaṃ rājyaṃ śāpito'si mamopari //

Hearing such resolute words of firm determination from the monkeys, bears and demons, he (Sri Ram) most respectfully said the following sweet and pleasant words to Vibhishan (32), 'I command you on oath that as long as the earth sustains life (i.e. is inhabited by creatures), you must rule over the demons on my orders (33).

[Note :—Sri Ram has pre-empted Vibhishan's attempt to follow the example of others. The Lord instructed him to stay here even before Vibhishan could speak.]

न किञ्चिदुत्तरं वाच्यं त्वया मत्कृतकारणात्। एवं विभीषणं तूक्त्वा हनूमन्तमथाब्रवीत्।। 34।।
मारुते त्वं चिरञ्जीव ममाज्ञां मा मृषा कृथाः। जाम्बवन्तमथ प्राह तिष्ठ त्वं द्वापरान्तरे।। 35।।

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na kiñciduttaraṃ vācyaṃ tvayā matkṛtakāraṇāt /
evaṃ vibhīṣaṇaṃ tūktvā hanūmantamathābravīt //
mārute tvaṃ cirañjīva mamājñāṃ mā mṛṣā kṛthāḥ /
jāmbavantamatha prāha tiṣṭha tvaṃ dvāparāntate //

Now do not answer back to me; do not counter-reply, object or contradict my orders that I've given you; don't go against this arrangement that I have prescribed for you'. Saying this to Vibhishan, he turned to Hanuman and said (34) 'Oh the son of the Wind God! You be blessed with a long life (or, you must live for a very long time to come, almost eternally). Do not make my earlier orders null and void. [Please see Lanka Kand, Canto 16, verse nos. 12-16.]'.

Then he turned to Jamvant and said, 'You stay here till the end of Dwapar Yug (i.e. the third era of the 4 era celestial cycle; according to legends, Lord Krishna married his daughter after a duel with him) (35).

मया सार्धं भवेद्युद्धं यत्किञ्चित्कारणान्तरे। ततस्तान् राघवः प्राह ऋक्षराक्षसवानरान्।
सर्वानेव मया सार्धं प्रयातेति दयान्वितः।। 36।।

mayā sārdhaṃ bhavedyuddhaṃ yatkiñcitkāraṇāntare /
tatastān rāghavaḥ prāha ṛkṣarākṣasavānarān /
sarvāneva mayā sārdhaṃ prayāteti dayānvitaḥ //

Due to some circumstances, you will have to fight with me'. [Here Sri Ram is referring to the incarnation of Lord Krishna in the Dwapar era.] Thereafter, Raghav most mercifully and showing his affections, benevolence and munificence, instructed the rest of the bears, monkeys and demons to accompany him, saying, 'All of you, come along with me' (36).

ततः प्रभाते रधुवंशनाथो विशालवक्षाः सितकञ्जनेत्रः।
पुरोधसं प्राह वसिष्ठमार्यं यान्त्वग्निहोत्राणि पुरो गुणो मे।। 37।।

tataḥ prabhāte raghuvaṃśanātho viśālavakṣāḥ sitakañjanetraḥ /
purodhasaṃ prāha vasiṣṭhamāryaṃ yāntvagnihotrāṇi puro guṇo me //

The next morning, the Lord of the clan of Raghu who had a broad chest and lotus-like eyes, said to the revered priest Vashistha, 'Oh Guru! Let the various sacrificial fires precede me in the vanguard of the final procession' (37).

ततो वसिष्ठोऽपि चकार सर्वं प्रास्थानिकं कर्म महद्विधानात्।
क्षौमाम्बरो दर्भपवित्रपाणिर्महाप्रयाणाय गृहीतबुद्धिः।। 38।।

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निष्क्रम्य रामो नगरात्सिताभ्राच्छशीव यातः शशिकोटिकान्तिः।
रामस्य सव्ये सितपद्महस्ता पद्मा गता पद्मविशालनेत्रा।। 39।।

tato vasiṣṭho'pi cakāra sarvaṃ prāsthānikaṃ karma mahadvidhānāt /
kṣaumāmbaro darbhapavitrapāṇirmahāprayāṇāya gṛhītabuddhīḥ //
niṣkramya rāmo nagarātsitābhrācchaśīva yātaḥ śaśikoṭikāntiḥ /
rāmasya savye sitapadmahastā padmā gatā padmaviśālanetrā //

Then sage Vashistha made all the preparations for the final departure (of Sri Ram and his party) very carefully in accordance with the procedure laid down for the purpose by the scriptures and tradition. Sri Ram—who was radiant like crores (millions) of moons at that time, wore a silk cloth wrapped round his body, had a purifying finger ring made of Kush grass in his fingers, and had his attention focused on the final exit from this mundane, artificial, delusory and entangling world—came out of the city like the Moon emerging from behind fluffy white clouds. On his left was goddess Laxmi with a white lotus in her hands and who had eyes as broad as the lotus flower (38-39).

पार्श्वेऽथ दक्षेऽरुणकञ्जहस्ता श्यामा ययौ भूरपि दीप्यमाना।
शास्त्राणि शस्त्राणि धनुश्च बाणा जग्मुः पुरस्ताद् धृतविग्रहास्ते।। 40।।

pārśve'tha dakṣe'ruṇakañjahastā śyāmā yayau bhūrapi dīpyamānā /
śāstrāṇi śastrāṇi dhanuśca bāṇā jagmuḥ purastād dhṛtavigrahāste //

On his (Sri Ram) right side was mother Earth who had a red lotus in her hand and whose complexion was of a glowing dark hue. In front of the Lord, all the scriptures, his weapons, and his bow and arrows walked in an animated, personified form (40).

वेदाश्च सर्वे धृतविग्रहाश्च ययुश्च सर्वे मुनयश्च दिव्याः।
माता श्रुतीनां प्रणवेन साध्वी ययौ हरिं व्याहृतिभिः समेता।। 41।।

vedāśca sarve dhṛtivigrahāśca yayuśca sarve munayaśca divyāḥ /
mātā śrutīnāṃ praṇavena sādhvī yayau hariṃ vyāhṛtibhiḥ sametā //

Similarly, all the Vedas, all the holy men such as the monks, the sages, the hermits, the seers and the ascetics of the realm, the word symbol 'OM' representing cosmic divinity, the mother of the Vedas, called Gayatri, and the different Vyahriti[1] (the primal words from which the entire creation is said to have been formed) went alongside Sri Hari (Sri Ram) in an animated, personified form (41).

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[Note—[1]The Vyahriti—According to Sankhya Shastra and the Purans, Brahma, who is known as 'Swayambhu' (self created in the sense that he had no father or ancestor) created seven elements called 'Vyahriti', viz. Bhuh, Buhvaha, Swaha, Mahaha, Janaha, Tapaha and Satyam respectively (भूः, भुवः, स्वः, महः, जनः, तपः, सत्यमः) which constitute the fundamental elements which formed the gross body of the creation as its core building blocks at the macro level. Encircling this core is the rounded globe called 'earth' which is surrounded by concentric circles constituting of 'water', 'energy' called 'Tej', 'wind or air', 'sky or space', the notions that are described as 'pride, ego, arrogance, haughtiness and vanity' collectively called 'Ahankar', and the notions of 'importance, majesty, grandeur, magnificence and lordliness' called collectively as 'Mahattatva'. Each of them was 10 times larger than its preceding layer or circle.]

गच्छन्तमेवानुगता जनास्ते सपुत्रदाराः सह बन्धुवर्गैः।
अनावृतद्वारमिवापवर्गं रामं व्रजन्तं ययुराप्तकामाः।
सान्तःपुरः सानुचरः सभार्यः शत्रुघ्नयुक्तो भरतोऽनुयातः।। 42।।

gacchantamevānugatā janāste saputradārāḥ saha bandhuvargaiḥ/
anāvṛtadvāramivāpavargaṃ rāmaṃ vrajantaṃ yayurāptakāmāḥ/
sāntaḥpuraḥ sānucaraḥ sabhāryaḥ śatrughnayukto bharato'nuyātaḥ//

In this manner, when Sri Ram left the place, all the citizens followed him alongside, accompanied by their friends, relatives, kith and kin, wives and sons etc., as if they were proceeding towards the open doors of deliverance, of emancipation and salvation, after having lived a fruitful, rewarding and successful life with all their wishes fulfilled[1]. Following them were the members of the royal household, royal servants and attendants as well as Bharat with Shatrughan and their respective wives (42).

[Note—[1]That is, there was no sense of gloom or regret at the impending death or a virtual mass suicide. On the contrary, there was elation, rejoicings, ecstasy and a carnival-like spirit all around. Truly enough, the denizens were very fortunate and privileged, for who else and where else will one find such a golden and unique opportunity to accompany the Lord in his final journey from this world of an endless cycle of birth and death and its accompanying cycle of hassles, tribulations, torments and troubles.]

गच्छन्तमालोक्य रमासमेतं श्रीराघवं पौरजनाः समस्ताः।
सबालवृद्धाश्च ययुर्द्विजाग्र्याः सामात्यवर्गाश्च समन्त्रिणो ययुः।। 43।।

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gacchantamālokya ramāsametaṃ
śrīrāghavaṃ paurajanāḥ samastāḥ /
sabālavṛddhāśca yayurdvijāgryāḥ
sāmātyavargāśca samantriṇo yayuḥ //

Seeing Raghav (Sri Ram) going along with Laxmi, all the citizens with their children and aged ones as well as all the Brahmins accompanied by the general courtiers and ministers, also followed him (43).

सर्वे गताः क्षत्रमुखाः प्रहृष्टा वैश्याश्च शूद्राश्च तथा परे च।
सुग्रीवमुख्या हरिपुङ्गवाश्च स्नाता विशुद्धाः शुभशब्दयुक्ताः।। 44।।

sarve gatāḥ kṣatramukhaḥ prahṛṣṭā vaiśyāśca śūdrāśca tathā pare ca /
sugrīvamukhyā haripuṅgavāśca snātā viśuddhāḥ śubhaśabdayuktāḥ //

After them followed the chief Kshatriyas (the ruling princely class), Vaishyas (the trading class), Shudras (the low caste people) and other classes of people in the society, most delightedly and very cheerfully. Then—after having purified themselves by bathing in the river—followed Sugriv and other senior monkeys chanting auspicious words (i.e. raising slogans such as 'glory to Sri Ram'). [The scene reminds one of a festival procession] (44).

न कश्चिदासीद्भवदुःखयुक्तो दीनोऽथवा बाह्यसुखेषु सक्तः।
आनन्दरूपानुगता विरक्ता ययुश्च रामं पशुभृत्यवर्गैः।। 45।।

na kaścidāsīdbhavaduḥkhayukto dīno'thavā bāhyasukheṣu saktaḥ /
ānadarūpānugatā viraktā yayuśca rāmaṃ paśubhṛtyavargaiḥ //

Out of them, none was sorry or regretful for the world left behind them. None was distressed or anguished, nor were they attached to any of the objects of this materialistic and delusory mundane world that they were leaving behind. All of them became totally detached from this world, had full renunciation, and felt extremely contented and happy. They followed Sri Ram—who is an embodiment of supreme and sublime bliss personified—most willingly and cheerfully, together with their domestic animals (i.e. pets and livestock), servants, subordinates and helpers (45).

भूतान्यदृश्यानि च यानि तत्र ये प्राणिनः स्थावरजङ्गमाश्च।
साक्षात्परात्मानमनन्तशक्तिं जग्मुर्विरक्ताः परमेकमीशम्।। 46।।

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bhūtānyadṛśyāni ca yāni tatra ye prāṇinaḥ sthāvarajaṅgamāśca /
sākṣātparātmānamanantaśaktiṃ jagmurvimuktāḥ paramekamīśam //

All those creatures who were never visible (i.e. never came out in the open or were sighted—such as insects, reptiles, microbes, worms, birds such as owls, bats etc.) as well as all other creatures of this animate (i.e. movable) and inanimate (i.e. immovable) world renounced their attachments with this mundane, delusory, perishable and mortal world, and followed Sri Ram who is the only supreme Lord, eternally all powerful and almighty, and the supreme, exalted, macrocosmic transcendental Soul personified (46).

नासीदयोध्यानगरे तु जन्तुः कश्चित्तदा राममना न यातः।
शून्यं बभूवाखिलमेव तत्र पुरं गते राजनि रामचन्द्रे।। 47।।

nāsīdayodhyānagare tu jantuḥ kaścittadā rāmamanā na yātaḥ /
śūnyaṃ babhūvākhilameva tatra puraṃ gate rājani rāmacandre //

At that point of time, there was not a single soul (creature) left in Ayodhya who had not focused his attention on Sri Ram, and had not followed him. As soon as the king Sri Ramchandra made his final exit from the city (bidding it farewell), it was rendered completely desolate and uninhabited (47).

ततोऽतिदूरं नगरात्स गत्वा दृष्ट्वा नदीं तां हरिनेत्रजाताम्।
ननन्द रामः स्मृतपावनोऽतो ददर्श चाशेषमिदं हृदिस्थम्।। 48।।

tato'tidūraṃ nagarātsa gatvā dṛṣṭvā nadīṃ tāṃ harinetrajātām /
nananda rāmaḥ smṛtapāvano'to dadarśa cāśeṣamidaṃ hṛdistham //

After going a little distance from the city, Sri Ram saw the majestic river (Saryu) which had emerged from the eyes of Lord Vishnu himself. Sri Ram—who can purify the world (of its sins, vices, evils, misdeeds, misdemeanors, perversions and waywardness) by his mere remembrance—became very glad and cheerful on seeing it. He saw (visualised) the whole world in his heart (48).

अथागतस्तत्र पितामहो महान् देवाश्च सर्वे ऋषयश्च सिद्धाः।
विमानकोटिभिरपारपारं समावृतं खं सुरसेविताभिः।। 49।।
रविप्रकाशाभिरभिस्फुरत्स्वं ज्योतिर्मयं तत्र नभो बभूव।
स्वयम्प्रकाशैर्महतां महद्भिः समावृतं पुण्यकृतां वरिष्ठैः।। 50।।

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athāgatastatra pitāmaho mahān devāśca sarve ṛṣayaśca siddhāḥ /
vimānakoṭibhirapārapāraṃ samāvṛtaṃ khaṃ surasevitābhiḥ //
raviprakāśābhirabhisphuratsvaṃ jyotirmayaṃ tatra nabho babhūva /
svayamprakāśairmahatāṃ mahadbhiḥ samāvṛtaṃ puṇyakṛtāṃ variṣṭhaiḥ //

Just at that time, Brahma (the creator), the great patriarch of the Gods, accompanied by all other Gods, sages, hermits, seers, monks and mystics, arrived there. The measureless and vast sky was full with crores (millions) of sun-like splendorous chariots belonging to Gods. The sky itself glowed brilliantly by the light emanating from them. Besides them, the sky was also crowded with divine souls who were self-illuminated and who had come down from their respective divine abodes to witness this stupendously magnificently and unique spectacle. These souls were the best among those who were righteous and noble, and were also most exalted amongst the great souls (49-50).

ववुश्च वाताश्च सुगन्धवन्तो ववर्ष वृष्टिः कुसुमावलीनाम्।
उपस्थिते देवमृदङ्गनादे गायत्सु विद्याधरकिन्नरेषु।। 51।।

vavuśca vātāśca sugandhavanto vavarṣa vṛṣṭiḥ kusumāvalīnām /
upasthite devamṛdaṅganāde gāyatsu vidyādharakinnareṣu //

At that time a pleasant, aromatically perfumed, fragrant, soft and sweet breeze blew, and there was a continuous rain of flowers. The Gods played their musical drums and tumbrels, while the Vidyadhars and Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers) sang laudatory songs of celebration (51).

रामस्तु पद्भ्यां सरयूजलं सकृत्स्पृष्ट्वा परिक्रामदनन्तशक्तिः।
ब्रह्मा तदा प्राह कृताञ्जलिस्तं रामं परात्मन् परमेश्वरस्त्वम्।। 52।।

rāmastu padbhyāṃ sarayūjalaṃ sakṛt spṛṣṭvā parikrāmadanantaśaktiḥ /
brahmā tadā prāha kṛtāñjalistaṃ rāmaṃ parātman parameśvarastvam //

The almighty Sri Ram touched the holy water of river Saryu once (i.e. he sipped it once using his palms as a cup) and reverentially circumambulated it on foot. Lord Brahma (the patriarch of the Gods; the creator) folded his hand at the elbows and joined his palms in submissive humility and prayed to Sri Ram, 'Oh Sri Ram! You are the supreme, eternal, most exalted, sublime and ultimate truthful Soul (52).

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विष्णुः सदानन्दमयोऽसि पूर्णो जानासि तत्त्वं निजमैशमेकम्।
तथापि दासस्य ममाखिलेश कृतं वचो भक्तपरोऽसि विद्वन्।। 53।।

viṣṇuḥ sadānandamayo'si pūrṇo jānāsi tattvaṃ nijamaiśamekam /
tathāpi dāsasya mamākhileśa kṛtaṃ vaco bhaktaparo'si vidvan //

You are Lord Vishnu, eternally blissful, peaceful, tranquil and happy, and complete in all respects. You are the only one who is wise, expert, sagacious, erudite and knowledgeable enough to know about the essential, truthful and correct nature and essence of your 'true self'. Still, oh Lord of the universe and the most wise, knowledgeable and expert one, you have fulfilled (i.e. kept) my prayer which is in accordance with your nature of being magnanimous, benevolent, munificent and benign towards your devotees (53).

त्वं भ्रातृभिर्वैष्णवमेवमाद्यं प्रविश्य देहं परिपाहि देवान्।
यद्वा परो वा यदि रोचते तं प्रविश्य देहं परिपाहि नस्त्वम्।। 54।।

tvaṃ bhrātṛbhirvaiṣṇavamevamādyaṃ praviśya dehaṃ paripāhi devān /
yadvā paro vā yadi rocate taṃ praviśya dehaṃ paripāhi nastvam //

Now, I request you that you must merge yourself along with your brothers in the eternal form of Lord Vishnu and protect (i.e. take care and look after the welfare of) the Gods (in the heaven). Otherwise, if you so wish, you can enter (migrate to) some other body (form) dear to you and protect us in that form (i.e. in your new incarnation or manifestation) (54).

त्वमेव देवाधिपतिश्च विष्णुर्जानन्ति न त्वां पुरुषा विना माम्।
सहस्रकृत्वस्तु नमो नमस्ते प्रसीद देवेश पुनर्नमस्ते।। 55।।

tvameva devādhipatiśca viṣṇurjānanti na tvāṃ puruṣā vinā mām /
sahasrakṛtvastu namo namaste prasīda deveśa punarnamaste //

You are the supreme Lord of the Gods, Lord Vishnu himself. This fact is not known to anyone except me. Oh Lord of Gods! I bow to you most reverentially thousands of times. Please be pleased with me. I bow before you again and again' (55).

पितामहप्रार्थनया स रामः पश्यत्सु देवेषु महाप्रकाशः।
मुष्णंश्च चक्षूंषि दिवौकसां तदा बभूव चक्रादियुतश्चतुर्भुजः।। 56।।

pitāmahaprārthanayā sa rāmaḥ paśyatsu deveṣu mahāprakāśaḥ /
muṣṇaṃśca cakṣūṃṣi divaukasāṃ tadā babhūva cakrādiyutaścaturbhujaḥ //

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Thence, on the prayers of grandfather Brahma, Sri Ram—who was most radiant and majestic in his splendour and glory—reverted back to his original 4-armed form (of Lord Vishnu) complete with the discus etc. even while the Gods watched spellbound in wonder and awe but were unable to discern what was actually happening[1] (56).

[Note—[1]That is, the transition from the human body to the divine form of Lord Vishnu was done so stealthily, as if by magic, that the Gods could not realise what was happening. One moment they saw a person called Sri Ram down there on the ground on the banks of river Saryu from their position in the sky, and the other moment, that image vanished or simply melted âway in thin air, and instead of it, they suddenly, imperceptibly found Lord Vishnu standing amongst their midst.]

शेषो बभूवेश्वरतल्पभूतः सौमित्रिरत्यद्भुतभोगधारी।
बभूवतुश्चक्रदरौ च दिव्यौ कैकेयिसूनूर्लवणान्तकश्च ।। 57 ।।

śeṣo babhūveśvaratalpabhūtaḥ saumitriratyadbhutabhogadhārī /
babhūvatuścakradarau ca divyau kaikeyisūnūrlavaṇāntakaśca //

Laxman had transformed himself into the legendary Sheshnath, the serpent with a majestic hood on whom Lord Vishnu reclined, while Kaikeyi's son Bharat and the slayer of demon Lavan, i.e. Shatrughan, metamorphosed into the discus and conch respectively (57).

सीता च लक्ष्मीरभवत्पुरैव रामो हि विष्णुः पुरुषः पुराणः।
सहानुजः पूर्वशरीरकेण बभूव तेजोमयदिव्यमूर्तिः ।। 58 ।।

sītā ca lakṣmīrabhavatpureva rāmo hi viṣṇuḥ puruśaḥ purāṇaḥ /
sahānujaḥ pūrvaśarīrakeṇa babhūva tejomayadivyamūrtiḥ //

Sita had already transformed herself into goddess Laxmi. Lord Ram is indeed Lord Vishnu himself as mentioned in the Purans. He resumed his original, divine, holy, ethereal, cosmic, splendorous and majestic form along with his three brothers (58).

विष्णुं समासाद्य सुरेन्द्रमुख्या देवाश्च सिद्धा मुनयश्च दक्षाः।
पितामहाद्याः परितः परेशं स्तवैर्गृणन्तः परिपूजयन्तः ।। 59 ।।

viṣṇuṃ samāsādya surendramukhyā devāśca siddhā munayaśca dakṣāḥ /
pitāmahādyāḥ paritaḥ pareśaṃ stavairgṛṇantaḥ paripūjayantaḥ //

After that, all the Gods such as Indra (the Lord of Gods) and other Gods, the Siddhas (mystics, attained souls), the sages, ascetics, hermits and seers, the Yakshas (a type of mythical demigods who are attendants

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of Kuber to guard his treasures), Lord Brahma (the patriarch of the Gods) and other guardians of the world came there, honoured and praised the Lord by chanting laudatory songs and devotional hymns called Stotras in his honour, and duly worshipped, honoured and adored him. In other words, they all accorded him a warm and formal welcome in the heaven (59).

आनन्दसम्प्लावितपूर्णचित्ता बभूविरे प्राप्तमनोरथास्ते।
तदाह विष्णुर्द्रुहिणं महात्मा एते हि भक्ता मयि चानुरक्ताः।।60।।

ānandsamplāvitapūrṇacittā babhūvire prāptamanorathāste/
tadāha viṣṇurdruhiṇaṃ mahātmā ete hi bhaktā mayi cānuraktāḥ//

All of them were exhilarated and ecstatic because all their wishes had been fulfilled. The great Lord Vishnu said to Brahma, 'All of these are my devotees, and they have great affection and endearment for me (60).

यान्तं दिवं मामनुयान्ति सर्वे तिर्यक्शरीरा अपि पुण्ययुक्ताः।
वैकुण्ठसाम्यं परमं प्रयान्तु समाविशस्वाशु ममाज्ञया त्वम्।।61।।

yāntaṃ divaṃ māmanuyānti sarve tiryakśarīrā api puṇyayuktāḥ/
vaikuṇṭhasāmyaṃ paramaṃ prayāntu samāviśasvāśu mamājñayā tvam//

All of them want to accompany me to the heavens. Out of them, those who are worms (and other subterranean lowly creatures) are also very fortunate and virtuous. Let them go to the best of abodes (worlds, heavens, celestial places fit for them) which are equivalent to my own abode called Vaikuntha. Upon my orders, you must facilitate their entry there immediately' (61).

श्रुत्वा हरेर्वाक्यमथाब्रवीत्कः सान्तानिकान्यान्तु विचित्रभोगान्।
लोकान्मदीयोपरि दीप्यमानांस्त्वद्भावयुक्ताः कृतपुण्यपुञ्जाः।।62।।

śrutvā harervākyamathābravītkaḥ santānikānyāntu vicitrabhogān/
lokānmadīyopari dīpyamānāṃstvadbhāvayuktāḥ kṛtapuṇyapuñjāḥ//

Hearing these words of Sri Hari (Lord Vishnu), Brahma replied, 'Oh Lord! All of these fortunate and noble creatures who are endowed with your devotion will attain (go to) a divine Loka (abode) called Santanik which is higher than my own Loka, and which is most majestic and fully provided with all imaginable comforts and pleasures (62).

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ये चापि ते राम पवित्रनाम गृणन्ति मर्त्या लयकाल एव।
अज्ञानतो वापि भजन्तु लोकांस्तानेव योगैरपि चाधिगम्यान्।। 63।।

ye cāpi te rāma pavitranāma gṛṇanti martyā layakāla eva/
ajñānato vāpi bhajantu lokāṃstāneva yogairapu cādhigamyān//

Oh Sri Ram! Besides them, all those who pronounce your holy, divine and pure name at the time of death, or have devotion, affection and adoration for you even unwillingly, even by chance or by error (i.e. without doing it sincerely; just for outwardly show; or pretend to do it with selfish and ulterior motives)—all of them shall, verily, achieve that Loka (exalted abode) which is the place where Yogis (ascetics) go after death' (63).

ततोऽतिहृष्टा हरिराक्षसाद्याः स्पृष्ट्वा जलं त्यक्तकलेवरास्ते।
प्रपेदिरे प्राक्तनमेव रूपं यदंशजा ऋक्षहरीश्वरास्ते।। 64।।

tato'tihṛṣṭā harirākṣasādyāḥ spṛṣṭvā jalaṃ tyaktakalevarāste/
prapedire prāktanameva rūpaṃ yadaṃśajā ṛkṣaharīśvarāste//

Hearing this, all the monkeys and demons became extremely delighted and happy. All of them began to shed their mortal bodies by touching the water (of river Saryu) one by one. All of those monkeys and bears merged into their respective parent Gods from whom they had initially emerged (manifested) earlier in order to serve Sri Ram (64).

प्रभाकरं प्राप हरिप्रवीरः सुग्रीव आदित्यजवीर्यवत्त्वात्।
ततो विमग्नाः सरयूजलेषु नराः परित्यज्य मनुष्यदेहम्।। 65।।
आरुह्य दिव्याभरणा विमानं प्रापुश्च ते सान्तनिकाख्यलोकान्।
तिर्यक्प्रजाता अपि रामदृष्टा जलं प्रविष्टा दिवमेव याताः।। 66।।

prabhākaraṃ prāpa haripravīraḥ sugrīva ādityajavīryavattvāt/
tato vimagnāḥ sarayūjaleṣu narāḥ parityajya manuṣyadeham//
āruhya divyābharaṇā vimānaṃ prāpuśca te sāntanikākhyalokān/
tiryakprajātā api rāmadṛṣṭvā jalaṃ praviṣṭā divameva yātāḥ//

The king of monkeys, Sugriv, had been born from the sperms of the Sun God, so he merged with him. Thereafter, the common citizens of Ayodhya began to drown (i.e. plunge) themselves in the water of river Saryu, shed their mortal human bodies, assume divine forms fully decked up with divine ornaments, mounted celestial planes and

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ascended to the celestial abode called Santanik. Those subjects (of Sri Ram's kingdom) who were born as lowly worms and other humble creatures also went to the heavens when the (benevolent, merciful) glance of Sri Ram fell on them by drowning themselves in the water (65-66).

दिदृक्षवो जानपदाश्च लोका रामं समालोक्य विमुक्तसङ्गाः।
स्मृत्वा हरिं लोकगुरुं परेशं स्पृष्ट्वा जलं स्वर्गमवापुरञ्जः।।67।।

didṛkṣavo jānapadāśca lokā rāmaṃ samālokya vimuktasaṅgāḥ/
smṛtvā hariṃ lokaguruṃ pareśaṃ spṛṣṭvā jalaṃ svargamavāpurañjaḥ//

All other subjects of the realm at large who had come to witness the spectacle were so moved by the sight and the holy and divine vision of Sri Ram that they renounced the world and became totally detached from it. They focused their memory and attention on Sri Hari who is the supreme spiritual guide (teacher) for the whole world, touched the water (i.e. submerged themselves in the river Saryu) and went their way to heaven (67).

[Note :—This verse read in conjunction with verse no. 65 is clear indication that no one stayed behind in Ayodhya after Sri Ram's departure. So, the question arises, where did Kush rule from if he was appointed as the king to inherit Sri Ram's kingdom as described in verse nos. 13-18? Well, the wordings of verses show that they were 'sent' to their respective capitals and verse no. 18, 1st line shows that the two boys had great difficulty bidding farewell to their father. This means that Kush established another city similar to Ayodhya, or he might have temporarily migrated to some other city and made it his capital for some time before coming back to Ayodhya to rejuvenate it with new lease of life and re-establish its lost glory after lapse of some time in order to overcome the initial shock and trauma of calamitous events that had unfolded in Ayodhya by Sri Ram's departure. According to popular legend and ancient geography of India, Lord Ram assigned a part of the earlier area called Madhyadesh to Kush who founded the ancient city of Kushvati, later on known as Kushinara or Kushinagar near the eastern city of Gorakhpur in the eastern part of the present state of Uttar Pradesh of India.]

श्रीवेदव्यास उवाच

एतावदेवोत्तरमाह शम्भुः श्रीरामचन्द्रस्य कथावशेषम्।
यः पादमप्यत्र पठेत्स पापाद्विमुच्यते जन्मसहस्रजातात्।।68।।

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śrīvedavyāsa uvāca

etāvadevottaramāha śambhuḥ śrīrāmacandrasya kathāvaśeṣam /
yaḥ pādamapyatra paṭhetsa pāpādvimucyate janmasahasrajātāt //

Sage Veda Vyas says—Lord Shiva has only described this brief epilogue to Sri Ram's divine story which is called Uttar Kand of Ramayan. Anyone who reads even a quarter part of any of its verses is sure to be freed from the sins of his thousands of births[1] (68).

[Note—[1]That is, by inference, it means that only those who wish to turn away from sins will ever think of reading this holy treatise. The mere desire to read it shows that the person wants to wean himself away from the drudgery of this mundane, artificial, materialistic, illusionary and entrapping world.]

दिने दिने पापचयं प्रकुर्वन् पठेन्नरः श्लोकमपीह भक्त्या।
विमुक्तसर्वाघचयः प्रयाति रामस्य सालोक्यमनन्यलभ्यम्।। 69।।

dine dine pāpacayaṃ prakurvan paṭhennaraḥ ślokamapīha bhaktyā /
vimuktasarvāghacayaḥ prayāti rāmasya sālokyamananyalabhyam //

Even those who commit numerous sins, misdeeds and misdemeanors daily, if they read even a single verse (Sloka) with full devotion, conviction, faith and veneration—are freed from the treasure of all sins that they might have committed or accumulated over time, and attain the most rare and exalted stature of being one with Sri Ram. This stature is called 'Salokya Pad' which is difficult to attain for others (69).

आख्यानमेतद्रघुनायकस्य कृतं पुरा राघवचोदितेन।
महेश्वरेणाप्तभविष्यदर्थं श्रुत्वा तु रामः परितोषमेति।। 70।।

ākhyānametadraghunāyakasya kṛtaṃ purā rāghavacoditena /
maheśvareṇāptabhaviṣyadarthaṃ śrutvā tu rāmaḥ paritoṣameti //

On the inspiration of Sri Ram, Lord Shiva had first conceived and narrated this holy and divine story of the Lord in which all his divine and stupendously marvelous deeds and playful activities are described. Sri Ram is very pleased on hearing it (70).

रामायणं काव्यमनन्तपुण्यं श्रीशङ्करेणाभिहितं भवान्यै।
भक्त्या पठेद्यः शृणुयात्स पापैर्विमुच्यते जन्मशतोद्भवैश्च।। 71।।

rāmāyaṇaṃ kāvyamanantapuṇyaṃ śrīśaṅkareṇābhihitaṃ bhavānyai /
bhaktyā paṭhedyaḥ śṛṇuyātsa pāpairvimucyate janmaśatodbhavaiśca //

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Lord Shiva had described this epic called Ramayan which bestows righteousness, nobility, welfare and all round goodness and auspiciousness to his consort Parvati. Those who read or hear it with devotion, reverence, faith and conviction are liberated from the sins and their effects accumulated over hundreds of births (71).

अध्यात्मरामं पठतश्च नित्यं श्रोतुश्च भक्त्या लिखितुश्च रामः।
अतिप्रसन्नश्च सदा समीपे सीतासमेतः श्रियमातनोति।। 72।।

adhyātmarāmaṃ paṭhataśca nityaṃ śrotuśca bhaktyā likhituśca rāmaḥ/
atiprasannaśca sadā samīpe sītāsametaḥ śriyamātanoti//

Sri Ram, along with Sita, is extremely pleased, benignant, benevolent and munificent towards those who read, hear or write about this spiritual scripture called Adhyatma Ramayan with firm conviction, faith, devotion and reverence. He (Sri Ram) always stays with him and enhances his fame, prosperity, well being and general welfare (72).

रामायणं जनमनोहरमादिकाव्यं ब्रह्मादिभिः सुरवरैरपि संस्तुतं च।
श्रद्धान्वितः पठति यः शृणुयात्तु नित्यं विष्णोः प्रयाति सदनं स विशुद्धदेहः।। 73।।

rāmāyaṇaṃ janamanoharamādikāvyaṃ
brahmādibhiḥ suravarairapi saṃstutaṃ ca/
śraddhānvitaḥ paṭhati yaḥ śṛṇuyāttu nityaṃ
viṣṇoḥ prayāti sadanaṃ sa viśuddhadehaḥ//

This most stupendous, magnificent, enthralling, captivating and beautiful ancient epic called Adhyatma Ramayan, which is praised, lauded and honoured by Brahma and other exalted Gods, and which literally steals (i.e. enthralls, charms, enchants, fascinates and captivates) the mind of all humans—whosoever reads or hears it regularly with due respect, reverence, devotion, faith and conviction, is sure to assume a pure, holy and divine form at the end of his life and attain the most exalted abode of Lord Vishnu himself (73).

* * *

— The End —

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Appendix 1

Short Life Sketch of Sage Veda Vyas

Adhyatma Ramayan is part of Brahamand Puran's Uttar Khand. Since the text of the Puran was written by sage Veda Vyas, it naturally follows that Adhyatma Ramayan was also written by him.

Sage Veda Vyas was a versatile, prolific, stupendously gifted prodigy of matchless genius par-excellence who is said to be an incarnation of Lord Vishnu himself. The Lord felt that the vast knowledge enshrined in the scriptures were so huge, jumbled up, abstract and complicated that they were beyond the reach of ordinary mortals. Further, till this time, everything was based on memory—hearing and speaking, passing from one generation of disciple to another generation in the oral form. There was a need to sort them out, to codify, systematise and classify this vast ocean of knowledge contained in the Vedas to make them more useful and handy.

So, Vishnu took the form of Veda Vyas to undertake this mammoth, daunting and formidable task. It is believed that Veda Vyas was born at the end of Dwapar Yug during the period of the Mahabharat war. He was a great grandson of sage Vashistha, grandson of sage Shakti and son of sage Parashar and his wife Satyawati.

He was named 'Krishna Dwepayan' because he had a dark complexion (Krishna) and was born in an island (hence called Dwepayan for the word Dwip means an island).

Soon after his birth, he took permission from his mother Satyawati and went to Badrinath in the Himalayas to do severe penances and austerities (Tapa), and he established his hermitage there. Hence, he was also called 'Badarayana'.

He consolidated, codified and classified the bewildering mass of Vedic knowledge in four distinct treatises and named them according

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to the class or section of the priests (called Ritwij—ऋत्विज्) who would use them for their ritualistic practices such as the fire sacrifices; he also wrote extensive commentaries on them—hence he was also called a teacher or preacher or commentator of the Vedas—or in other words, 'Veda Vyas'.

Sage Veda Vyas was a person with a stupendous talent and prodigious memory. Prior to him, the Vedas were unclassified, jumbled up, motley collection of philosophical and spiritual hymns as well as hymns associated with various formal rituals and worship. He segregated this jumbled mass into four distinct, separate volumes based on their content and purpose. The Vedic hymns had two basic categories—those dealing with philosophy, spiritualism and metaphysics, and the other dealing with formal ritualistic worship.

Since the latter use was more prevalent and dominant amongst the priestly class, and were used during the performance of various fire sacrifices (called Yagyas), he classified the Vedas into four basic texts called the Rig, the Atharva, the Sam and the Yajur Vedas.

A fire sacrifice had sixteen different catagories of Brahmins participating in it from the beginning to its end. The role of some were peripheral only. Only four class of priests were directly involved in the actual performance of the fire sacrifice. Such priests were called Ritwijs (;त्विज्), and Veda Vyas classified the vast text of the Vedas in such a way that each class of Ritwij could use a specific text of the Vedas for the specific duty assigned to them, or the special sphere of activity in which they were deemed to be an expert during the fire sacrifice. It is like a team of doctors performing an operation—they work collectively but still each of them is an expert in his field.

The four classes of such expert priests and the relevant Vedas were—(i) 'Riks'—They were also the senior most priests who presided over the ritual, and were also called Hota (होता). They chanted the hymns of the Rig Veda; (ii) 'Yajus'—These priests were junior to the Riks and were also called Adhwaryou (अध्वर्यु), and they chanted the verse categorised as the Yajur Veda; (iii) 'Samans'—These priests were the chanters of the holy hymns in a loud, sonorous voice in chorous. They can be called a modern day classical singers who attend any great function or festivity. They were also called Udgata (उद्गाता). The Sam Veda was meant for them; (iv) 'Atarvans'—These priests did the actual, physical offerings of oblations in the fire pit of the fire sacrifice. They were called Brahama because they represented the senior most

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God, and the hymns used by them were classified and collected under the name of the Atharva Veda.

So, as we have seen, the basic function of this classification was to facilitate the performance of the fire sacrifice.

But this exercise did not give peace of mind to Veda Vyas. His soul was yearning for something higher than these futile ritualistic exercises. So, as a next step, he further classified the Vedas into various Sanhitas, the Brahamans, the Aranykas and the Upanishads.

The result of this tireless exercise produced a much vaster tome of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature that Veda Vyas thought it necessary and fit to write the basic tenets and maxims of the Vedas into a single volume for quick referral. This was called 'Vedant Sutra', literally, the key to the Vedas.

The concept of the Vedas was still undigestable and daunting for the masses. So, he rendered the precepts palatable in the story telling form by writing the eighteen Purans—a stupendous achievement of mammoth proportions.

During the reign of Kurus, he was revered by both the Kurus as well as their arch rivals, the Pandavas. Both the heroes of the epic Mahabharat war held him in high esteem. When he decided to write the story of Mahabharat—the documentary narration of the epic story of clan-fight and the devastating war that followed it—he chose Lord Ganesh as his scribe; Veda Vyas had dictated while Ganesh had written the epic. It is said that the site where the epic Mahabharat was written is called 'Vyas Gufa' (Vyas' cave) located near Bharoach while the place where he did his final Tapa is called Vyas Ashram located in the village of Mana two miles from the shrine of Badrinath in the Himalayas. His hermitage during the epic Mahabharat war was located in a village about ten miles north of the city of Ambala in Haryana state. River Saraswati flows nearby. This place is also famous as Vyas Ashram.

Time flew by, but still Veda Vyas did not get peace at heart. Once, while he sat near river Saraswati, full of remorse, unsatisfied and contrite, sage Narad came to him and advised him to write Srimad Bhagwat containing 18000 Slokas. This voluminous work gave him final peace, so it is said.

His Guru was sage Yajnvalkya. His son was sage Shukdeo, the parrot saint. Veda Vyas chose five chief disciples who were initiated by him in the four Vedas and Purans. They were as follows—(a) He taught Rig Veda to his disciple named Paila; (b) Yajur Veda to his

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disciple Vaishampayana; (c) Sam Veda to his disciple Jaimini; (d) Atharva Veda to his disciple Sumanthu; and (e) the Purans to his disciple Ramharshan.

It is believed that sage Veda Vyas still lives, albeit in an invisible, intangible and subtle form in the shape of the vast reporteire of spiritual, philosophical and metaphysical literature that he has created for humankind, something which is not possible for any ordinary human being. These fortify the legend that he was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu and not an ordinary human being, a fact that is extensively covered in Vishnu Puran 3.3.

Summary of His Works :—

Veda Vyas classified the Vedas into 4 volumes— Rig, Yajur, Sam, Atharva.

Each of the four Vedas had various Sanhitas and Brahmanas as follows :—(a) The Rig Veda—Aitareya, Kausitaki; (b) the Yajur Veda—Taiteriya, Satpath; (c) the Sam Veda—Panchvimansa, Arseya, Vamsa, Talavakara, Daivata, Sadnimansa, Mantra, Chandogya, Samavidhana, Samhitopanishad; (d) the Atharva Veda—Gopath.

Each Veda had a sub-Veda as follows :- Rig Veda had Artha-Veda, Yajur Veda had Dhanur-Veda, Sam Veda had Gandharva-Veda and Atharva Veda had Ayurveda.

Again, the Rig and the Yajur Vedas had differents Aranyakas as follows—(a) The Rig Veda—Aitareya, Kausitaki; (b) the Yajur Veda—Taiteriya, Brhadarankya.

Each of the Vedas further had different Upanishads as follows—(a) The Rig Veda—Aitareyaopanishad, Kausitaki Upanishad; (b) the Yajur Veda—Taiteriya, Svetasvatra, Katho, Brhadaranakya, Maitri, Isavaso Upanishads; (c) the Sam Veda—Keno, Chandogya Upanishads; (d) the Atharva Veda—Mundako, Mandukyo, Prasano Upanishads.

Veda Vyas also wrote the 18 Purans as follows :—Brahma, Padma, Vishnu, Vayu, Bhagwat, Narad, Markandey, Agni, Bhavisya, Brahamavaivarta, Linga, Varah, Skanda, Vaaman, Kurma, Matsya, Garuda, Brahamanand Purans.

His other contributions to spiritual literature include—Mahabharat, Srimad Bhagwat, Vedant Sutra, Vyas Smriti and Laghu Vyas Sanhita.

* * *

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Appendix 2

Concepts of Vedanta Explained

Oh those with similar high wisdom, knowledge, erudition and scholarship—get up, rise up! (Rig Veda, 10/101/1). Even as an ocean is crossed with a ship, let the Lord take us across the ocean-like world for our welfare and good. Let our sins be destroyed. (Rig Veda 1/17/8). 'He who is the source of life and power, whose commands all beings, including the Gods, obey, whose shadow is immortality as well as death—we give our oblations to that supreme Lord whom we adore' (Rig Veda, 10/121/2).

Truth is obtained by faith and conviction, which in turn is obtained by the grace of the Lord; grace is obtained by consecration, and the latter is obtained by sincere self-dedication. (Yajur Veda, 19/30). A man crosses over (the ocean or the hurdle known as) 'death' simply by realising (coming to understand the essence, true nature and reality of) the supreme, transcendental Brahm (Yajur Veda, 31/18). The eternal and omnipresent Lord, in whom the entire universe finds its refuge, is known by the learned and wise ones with their eyes of wisdom and enlightenment. At the time of final conclusion of the universe, all things get dissolved in that supreme Lord, and at the time of a new creation it emerges from him. He exists everywhere in all the creations uniformly. [Yajur Veda, 32/8] Let our mind-intellect-heart be ever involved in the worship of the Lord. Let us be diligent towards experiencing the realisation of the Lord. (Yajur Veda 11/2)

'Ishvar is the Atma as seen and/or grasped by the mind. His highest name is OM. So repeat it, meditate on it and think of all its wonderful nature and attributes. Repeating the OM continually is the only true worship. It is not a word, it is God himself'—Swami Vivekanand (The Complete Works of Swami Vivekanand, 9 vols, 7/62).

In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God (Bible, Gospel of

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St. John, 1/1-2); and the Word was made flesh and dwelth amongst us (Gospel of St. John 1/14); 'That was the true light, which lighteth everyman that cometh into the world' (St. John, 1/9). 'I am the first and the last; the beginning and the end'. (Holy Bible, Revelation, 22/13).

'The aim of art is to represent not the outward appearance of thing but their inward significance.'—Aristotle.

In this appendix we shall acquaint ourselves with some basic concepts appearing in the text in a very simple, layman's language without going into complex metaphysics. The words Atma, various sheaths/veils enveloping it, the micro and macrocosm, the four states of existence, the three 'Gunas', the 'Vasanas' and 'Vrittis' of a creature and how they effect its personality, the concept of Samadhi, the mental state of flux, the concept of Mukti, recitation of Mantras, the cosmic sound called OM etc. have all been described in brief aided by explanatory charts and diagrams.

(1) Atma and the five sheath/veils surrounding it:-The Atma is the pure-self, the pure consciousness of the creature which is a microscopic reflection of the vast macrocosmic Soul of the cosmos called Brahm. The Atma provides life or consciousness to the inert layers of matter consisting of the five elements of air, water, space, fire and earth which crystallise to form the five coverings or sheaths around the pure Atma, and together (the Atma and the five sheaths) they create what we call the 'living being', whether plant, animal or humans.

The Panch Kosha :—Or the five sheaths covering or enveloping the Atma are as follows—(i) The food sheath; (ii) the vital air sheath; (iii) the mental sheath; (iv) the intellectual sheath; (v) and the bliss sheath.

The Food Sheath :—Is the physical body and derives its name because it is nourished by the food eaten by the creature. It consists of five organs of perception (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, skin) and five organs of action (hands, legs, mouth, genitals, anus).

The Vital Air Sheath :—Is the five-fold faculties of perception (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching), excretion (faeces, urine, sperm, sputum, sweat etc.), digestion (stomach, intestine, liver, pancreas, gall bladder, appendix), circulation (blood stream, artery,

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vein, capillary, heart) and thinking (the power to entertain, absorb and assimilate new information and thought).

The Mental Sheath :—It consists of the equipment which receives external stimuli through the sense organs and links it to the organs of action. Integrated response of body to the stimuli is done through the mind sheath. It is a continuous flow of thoughts. Because the mind is characterised by being in a state of flux, the mind (mental sheath), which is like a clerk, receives information (as stimuli) from the organs of perception and dispatches them to either the organs of action or the intellect when certain situations demand intelligent thinking and discrimination. Therefore, the mental sheath controls the vital air sheath and the food sheath.

The Intellect Sheath :—It acts as a controlling mechanism over the mind; It regulates, filters and modifies the response to the various stimuli. It has the discriminatory power which the mind, left alone to it, lacks.

The intellect sheath is the chief of the whole setup—in fact it controls the mind sheath, and through it, the functioning of the creature. It is the task master that directs the reckless horde of school boys running amok hither and thither, as it were. Those boys who obey this teacher become civilised and educated while the rest of the bunch remains buffoons or ruffians. The intellect can distinguish between the good and the bad, which the mental sheath cannot. The intellect can see beyond the realm of the known while the mind cannot. The intellect sheath is the spring board for all ideas and ideologies. The intellect helps to stabilise and channelise the mind even as the dam controls the river and harnesses its immense energy to produce powerful electricity.

These two sheaths—the mind and the intellect—are called the subtle sheaths or bodies. They have no physical structure in conventional terms like the gross or physical body called the food sheath or Anna Maya Kosh (consisting of the organs of perception and organs of action) as well as the air sheath (called the Pran Maya Kosh) of the creature. This subtle sheath has only functional aspect. The mental and intellect sheaths are like software of a computer vis-ë-vis the food and vital sheaths which resemble the hardware paraphernalia of the entire system.

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The Bliss Sheath :—Is the innermost sheath surrounding the Atma/the soul. It consists of 'inherent tendencies' or 'Vasanas' and 'Vrittis' before they are manifested into thoughts or actions. The intellect, mind etc. perform under the guidance and control of the bliss sheath. It is so-called because an individual experiences relative bliss, happiness, joy, contentedness, peace and tranquility when he is associated with it.

In the waking and dream states, a man experiences constant agitation of the mind, but once he reaches the realm of deep sleep state (bliss sheaths), he feels undisturbed, tranquil, peaceful and full of bliss. All agitations cease here. It is a relative experience vis-ë-vis the other sheaths. This sheath is also called the Causal Body of the creature.

The five sheaths are all inane, inert and inactive, and they constitute of matter. This together forms the personality of the Jiva, the living creature. He is conscious of all that his happening around him but these five sheaths are inert themselves. So naturally, there must be something distinct and separate from these sheaths that lend the Jiva the so-called life or consciousness. That factor which lends life or consciousness to the Jiva is called Atma, pure consciousness or the pure self of the creature. It is also the true identity or self of the Jiva.

Personality of the Jiva (creature) →	Deep sleeper	⇔	Causal body	←Atma
	Dreamer	⇔	Subtle body	
	Waker	⇔	gross body	

Diagram showing interaction between the Jiva and the Atma. Please also see verse no. 47 below and diagram at the end of this Canto.

(2) The States of Existence:—The Atma (soul) has four states of existence in a creature —the waking state, the dream state, the deep sleep state and the Turiya state of existence or consciousness. During the 'waking state', the Atma acts through the gross body (the physical body) of a man in its interaction with the outside world. During the 'dream state of existence', the Atma withdraws from the gross body and limits its interaction to the subtle body (the mind-intellect complex). During the 'deep sleep state of existence', the Atma withdraws itself into the causal body consisting of 'Vasanas' (inherent passions and desires) and 'Vrittis' (inherent tendencies and

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inclinations). But the pure consciousness, when it plunges within itself, that is, inside the causal body called the bliss sheath, it attains absolute bliss. This is called the 4th state called 'Turiya state of existence', and it is obtained by ascetics during Samadhi (a trance like state) when all the three sheaths covering the soul —food/air, mind/intellect and bliss—are removed. With the removal of these various sheaths, the Atma/soul of the individual (which is pure microcosmic consciousness) merges itself with the vast space around it (called the macrocosmic consciousness) because all separating sheaths have been done away with.

To explain the above concept, we may take the help of diagram and illustration :—

Man = Pure consciousness or Atma + Causal body (Vasanas)
+ Subtle body (mind-intellect) + Gross body (sense organs)

The body-mind-intellect are inane and inert. The live factor is the pure consciousness or Atma. This pure consciousness functions through its association with the causal body, the subtle body and the gross body, or in other words, the deep sleeper, the dreamer and the waker state of consciousness.

	Body	*(Consisting of)*	*Called the*	
	Gross body	(sense organs)	⇔ Waker	
Man →	Subtle body	(mind-intellect)	⇔ Dreamer	←Atma (pure-
	Causal body	(Vasanas)	⇔ Deep sleeper	consciousness)

This combination of 'waker-dreamer-deep sleeper' states of consciousness of a man is called Microcosm. The pure consciousness has its independent existence from the above three states, and this independence is called the 4th state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state' or the blissful state of consciousnes which has the bliss sheath as its external boundary.

According to Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma resides in the heart of the creature which is in an 8-petal lotus. The tendrils of this lotus described in this Upanishad represent the waking state of consciousness, the stalk represents the dream state of conscious, and the thalamus represents the deep sleep state of consciousness. When a creature abandons/discards the metaphoric habitat or dwelling in the 8-petal lotus represents by his heart and

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rises above its precincts (just like a householder snapping all his relationships with his home and takes to the path of Vanprastha), it obtains the forth state of consciousness called the 'Turiya state'. Eventually, when the creature, in the form of his subtle Atma (which according to the definition given to it by the Upanishad, inter alia, is 'Hans' which means a 'Swan' and is a metaphor for divinity, purity and wisdom) merges with or dissolves in the cosmic 'Naad' (all-pervading subtle sound in the cosmos), then the final or the so-called 'Turiyateet' stage is achieved (verse no. 8).

The **brain** has two components—the intellect and the mind. The former is under the direct control of the Atma while the mind is subordinate to the intellect. The mind receives worldly stimuli through the sense organs, passes them to the intellect, obtains instructions from the intellect and passes them on to the organs of action —this state prevails when the man is 'awake'.

Now, when he is asleep, there are two stages—either he dreams or he does not. During the 'dreams state', the inherent Vasanas (the hidden passions, yearning and desires) come into play at the sub conscious level and the mind lives up to all those Vasanas in an imaginary world. But when there is no dream, i.e. during the 'deep sleep state' of consciousness, the Atma is freed from interference and it reverts back to its original form of being 'nothingness, having no feelings and no emotions', just like the case wherein the mirror is removed from the front of a man and his image vanishes from it and the image reverts back or shrinks into its primary source or object, which in this case is the man himself whose image was formed in the mirror. The Atma is an image of the supreme Brahm. When the mirror of the mind-intellect is removed, it (Atma) reverts back to its primary form which is Brahm. So, it is the 'deep sleep state of consciousness' in which the creature comes in direct contact of his true identity or true self, which is called Atma or pure consciousness.

For the external world, a sleeping man is as good as being dead. For example, if a sleeping man is attacked by someone, he won't resist; he won't even know what has happened just in front of him while he was asleep. He is not dead, but for all practical purposes 'he is as good as dead'. He neither feels pain nor happiness when in a deep sleep state of existence, which is beyond the dream state of sleep. The

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'deep sleep state' is called 'Swaprant'—literally meaning 'in a state of suspended animation, or a self-imposed state of coma, or a state of being virtually dead, or coming to a stage voluntarily which is almost like being dead but is not actual death'.

The last stage, called 'Turiyateet', goes beyond the 3rd stage when a man wakes up into this world but remains 'virtually blind or sleeping' as far as his mind is concerned in relation to the gross world. Therefore, he remains awake but does not see; he does not smell, taste, feel and speak. Since all external stimuli fail to arouse his brain, he remains like 'a man sleep-walking'. In the absence of sensory perceptions, he does not feel neither pain nor sorrows, nor happiness and joys. He remains totally oblivious to them. He lives in a state of complete blissfulness.

(3) This **Microcosm** is the same as the **Macrocosm** in the larger scheme or scale of things, just like a single molecule of water with the formulae H_20 is the same whether in a cup or spoon and the vast, fathomless ocean. Here, the microcosm refers to the individual creature/Jiva/man and the macrocosm refers to the Viraat/Lord God/Nature.

Now, as has been explained in the foregoing discussion, it is relatively easy to control the subtle and the gross bodies through acquisition of truthful knowledge, wisdom and enlightenment. The greatest problem arises with the causal body consisting of Vrittis and Vasanas (passions and desires; inherent tendencies and inclinations). This can be solved by integrating the objective mind (the 'mind') and the subjective mind (the 'intellect'). When both are integrated, then the creature reacts in a healthy manner. When actions are controlled by the wisened intellect, the inherent tendencies of the creature fail to exert their influence on it and they gradually vanish (i.e. removed or catheterised). This results in the seeker merging his Microcosm with the Macrocosm.

According to Upanishadic sages/seers, 'Life' can be understood to be a series of experiences and that any definition of life should necessarily accept our moment-to-moment experiences as the units of life. The sages/seers further understood that an experience is not possible without three fundamental factors—the experiencer, the object of experience, and the relationship between the two, the

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experiencing. The experiencer is the subject who gains experiences of the world through the instruments of experience, namely, the body, mind, and intellect. Everyone gains experiences of three different worlds through these three different equipments viz. through the body, the world of objects; through the mind, the world of feelings; and through the intellect, the world of ideas.

If a person experiences the world of objects through his body, then he should be different from his body. If he experiences the world of feelings through his mind, then he, the experiencer, cannot be the mind. Again, if he gains experiences of the world of ideas through the intellect, he cannot be the intellect. He seems to be a different factor or entity altogether from these three instruments of experiences, though, of course, he has a very intimate relationship with them.

When the subject is identified with the intellect, he becomes the 'thinker', experiencing the world of ideas; when identified with the mind, he becomes the 'feeler' experiencing the world of emotions; and when identified with the body, he becomes the 'perceiver' experiencing the world of objects. But he, the subject, is neither the field of experience nor the instruments of experience. He must be totally different from them both.

The effect that ego and desires (Ahankar and Kaam) as well as Vasanas and Vrittis (inherent desires and tendencies) have on the mind, how they corrupt the objective mind and how their removal/ catheterisation purifies the mind and brings it under the direct control of the subjective mind (the intellect) of the creature is explained with the help of a diagram at the end of this appendix.

The **relationship between microcosm and macrocosm** varies according to the individual personality of the man. The grossest man with the maximum load of Vasanas and Vrittis imagines a wide chasm/gulf between the microcosm and the macrocosm. As the individual cleanses or purges himself of these inherent tendencies, this blending increases, and when it vanishes altogether, the distinction between the two also vanishes i.e. there is oneness between the microcosmic soul (creature's Atma) and the macrocosmic soul (Parmatma). This will be clear with the help of diagrams appended to this appendix.

According to the theory of Vedant, the Lord has two forms–

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Macrocosmic and Microcosmic. The macrocosmic form of the Lord is the Viraat which is huge, large, colossus, vast, gigantic, beyond all measurement. The microcosmic form of the Lord is the miniscule creature of this world. The gross body of the Lord vis-ë-vis the gross body of the creature are clarified Diagrammatically below :—

Microcosmic (creature)		**Macrocosmic (Viraat Lord)**
(i) Individual gross body (food+vital-air sheath)	=	Total of all gross bodies is called Viraat
(ii) Individual subtle body (the mind-intellect sheath)	=	Total of the subtle bodies is called Hiranyagarbh
(iii) Individual causal body (bliss sheath)	=	Total of causal bodies is called Eswar
This is the single creature		**This is the sum total of all the creatures represented by the Lord.**

(4) **Vrittis and Vasanas :**—'All human actions have one or more of these 7 causes —chance, nature, compulsion, habit, passion and desire' —Aristotle.

'Do not ye yet understand that what so entereth the mouth goeth into the belly, and is cast out into the draught? But those thing that proceed out of the mouth come forth from the heart (and the mind); and they defile the man for out of the heart (and the mind) proceed evil thought, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness (lies), blasphemies. These are the thing that defile a man' (Bible, St. Matthew, 15/17-20).

The pure consciousness (Atma) is the core of a man's personality. It is infinite, pure, all-pervading, omniscient, enlightened, changeless and supreme truth/reality. However, its infinite nature is clouded by the various Vrittis (inherent tendencies and inclinations) and Vasanas (desires and passion inherent in a man) resulting in the creation of a finite, limited, impure, corrupt, not fully enlightened, ever changing personality of the human being—such a person is called the 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer' entity. When the various Vrittis or Vasanas are eliminated or excluded (i.e. catheterised), the attitude undergoes transformation and metamorphosis from a perceiver-feeler-thinker entity (corresponding to the gross body, the mind and intellect collectively called the subtle body) into simple pure consciousness which, in reality, is the true identity of the creature. Please see the

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diagram appended to this appendix for further clarification on this subject.

Man's real and truthful nature is pure consciousness but he passes through the three different, distinct, relative states of the waker, dreamer and deep sleeper states as a result of the interaction or play of consciousness in the Gross, the Subtle and the Causal bodies respectively. No sooner the identification of the pure consciousness with any one or more of these bodies is removed than his original, pure, natural form is unfolded. This state is called self-realisation, or Godhood—or it is also called the state of supreme and sublime bliss, joy, happiness, peace and tranquility. Hence, when the pleural personality is removed, the real, singularly unique personality shines through.

It is the Atma which ignites/kindles/infuses life in the other five sheaths which are, left to them, inert and lifeless even as a piece of iron is lifeless without the infusion of life into it by a magnet held nearby. This magnet is separate and distinct from the iron but it invisibly gives life to the dead, gross and inert piece of iron. The iron is the five sheaths and the magnet is the Atma. Remove the Atma and the man is as lifeless as the piece of iron.

According to Hansopanishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the Atma resides in the heart which is shaped like an 8-petal lotus. Each petal of this lotus symbolises one type of 'Vritti'. The petal facing to the east represents the righteous and noble inclinations; the petal facing south-east corner (Agneya) represents sleep, drowsiness, lethargy, inertia, and disinclination to work; the petal facing to the south direction represents cruel tendencies; the petal facing in the south-west angle (Nairitya) represents the inclination of the mind to be sinful, unrighteous and pervert; the petal facing towards the west represents the desires for sports, action and play; that petal facing to the north-west direction (Vayaabya) represents the desire to be on the move, to go, roam and wander; the petal in the north direction represents the affection of a creature for Brahm, its true self and its desires to endear it; the petal in the north-east direction (Ishan) represents the desires for charity; and the petals surrounding the thalamus represent the tendency to renounce, to be dispassionate and detached from the artificial, sensual world (verse no. 8).

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There are three types of 'Vasanas' (worldly desires, passions and yearnings) as follows—(i) The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the body relate to one's son, property and wealth which a person has acquired and enjoys, and the world around him —his relatives, his fame, his contacts, his friends, his obligation, contracts and responsibility. It also means gratification of the sense organs of the body as well as to appease those who are related to him with this body. (ii) The 'Vasanas' pertaining to the scriptures relate to studying them more and more, acquiring scholarship, expertise and accompanying fame and money through them, relying too much on the letter of the scriptures and not their spirit, engrossing oneself in endless doubts and debates leading to confusions and contradictions. The scriptures are vast and like a fathomless sea. Trying to realise the Supreme Truth by delving into the depths of the scriptures is like extracting pearl by churning the ocean. Through it is theoretically possible, but practically it is impossible and too far fetched. (iii) The Vasanas relating to the external world are the various attractions and allurements that this apparently enchanting and colourful but deceitful and entrapping world presents to a person. It also refers to the various and endless responsibilities and obligations, real and imaginary, that a person has, or imagines he has towards this world.

(5) The three Gunas :—The three characteristics inherent present in the creature are the three thought textures which bombard the mind. These three thought textures are manifestations of the **Vrittis and Vasanas** (inherent tendencies or desires) of the creature which mire its soul as a covering or veil.

The Satvic desire is the veil covering the soul like a smoke covering the fire. A slight breeze will remove this smoke. Similarly a little bit of prayer and meditation will remove the Satvic desires; its removal requires the least effort. It is the foremost and the best amongst the three characteristics of a creature, and is marked by such qualities as good and positive virtuous, righteousness, creativity, noble deeds and thoughts, probity and propriety, morality and ethical conduct etc.

The Rajsic desires can be compared to dust on a mirror. In this case some dusting and rubbing is needed to clean the mirror; a greater effort is needed as compared to removal of smoke just by a puff of mild wind. It is the medium characteristic marked by worldly

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ambitions, desires, passions, expansionist tendencies, desire to have name, glory and honour, etc.

The Tamsic desires covering the soul are like a foetus in the womb—they cannot be removed easily, and require diligence, effort, dedicated and careful handling, requiring time and patience. These desires are nourished by he creature by his own diligence, and when this foetus matures and reveals itself, the creature just cannot simply disown them even as a man doesn't easily disowns his own son. The Tamsic quality is the basest and lowliest of the three characteristics, and is marked by propensity to commit sin, be inclined towards evil, perversion, immorality, vices, misdemeanours, anger, inertia et al; in short all those things that are demeaning and degrading for the creature and act as a roadblock in his spiritual evolvement.

The concept that 'I' is the body and not the 'pure conscious soul' leads to ignorance-based ego (Ahanakar). The constant concept of I vis-ë-vis the body and this world leads to the sense of possessiveness in the creature. 'Pure consciousness' mired by ego becomes 'a conditioned consciousness' and fails to remain pure. This is why ego (Ahankar) has been likened to a minister of the king. It directs and regulates the actions of the consciousness which, under its influence, loses its independence. This 'conditioned consciousness'—working through the mind-intellect-ego combine is called, inter-alia, 'Chitta'. The word also means memory. Hence this memory acts as a referral library for the intellect. The latter falls back on it and rely on it whenever it is in doubt. The quality of books in the library guides the student; similarly, the quality of inherent tendencies stored in the library of Chitta directly affects the inputs of the intellect, and through it, the mind and successively down the hierarchy to the body and its organs of perception and action.

Although the soul has nothing to do with this command chain (i.e. memory—inherent tendencies/ego/Vasanas—intellect—mind—body—action—result—more experience—stored in memory—and the chain continues), but for all practical purposes the Atma/soul is deemed responsible for it because of its sovereign nature.

So, the sincere seeker/aspirant should delineate this conscious from the rest of the chain and break the nexus between them so as to allow the glory of the pure consciousness of the soul to shine through

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like the splendorous sun breaking through from behind a curtain of clouds. It is like removing the various veils or covers from around the candle so that its light shines through the darkness of the room and illuminates all the corners of it.

The proportion of the three Gunas decides the nature, natural temperament, tendencies, habits and inclination of the creatures. For example, a person with a greater proportion of 'Satvic' (noble) characteristic will be considered nobler than a man with a greater proportion of 'Rajsic' or 'Tamsic' qualities. So we can say that sages, seers, prophets, scholars and generally enlightened persons have a high degree of 'Satvic' qualities in them. Kings and householders who live a noble life are example of those with higher amount of 'Rajsic' quality in them, while sinners, killers, drunks, rowdy elements, cheats etc. are those people with higher 'Tamsic' quality in them. These Gunas have direct bearing on the personality of a man. A separate full page diagram depicts the relationship between these Gunas and the personality of a man.

And important point to note here is that 'Ahankar' (ego, false pride, arrogance, haughtiness, hypocrisy and the sense of 'I') is the root cause of demoting even the most exalted of souls to an existence equivalent to that of an animal. This is stressed in Jabalu-panishad of Sam Veda tradition which stresses that 'Isha' or the supreme Lord of creation had to become a 'Pashupati', Lord of animals, just because Ahankar cast its dark shadow on him. An exalted soul too becomes demoted as an animal if he has Ahankar in him.

(6) **Mental flux** :—The five states of the mind are the following— (i) Kshipta, (ii) Mudh, (iii) Vikshipta, (iv) Ekagra and (v) Nirudha. The 'Kshipta' is the worst type of mind characterised by extreme recklessness and restlessness. It is susceptible to various negative traits such as confusion, conflicts, anger, anxiety, worry, tension, agitations of all kinds etc.

The 'Mudh' is the dull, inert and indolent state of mind. These first two states of mind are predominantly 'Tamas' in nature.

The 'Vikshipta' state is a 'distracted' state of mind in which it swings between the extremes of calmness and agitation. This is a 'Rajsic' quality.

The 'Ekagra' state is a focused or concentrated mind. It is a state in

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which the mind can keep alert and pin-pointed on any subject it is focusing upon. It helps to cultivate discipline in the aspirant.

The 'Nirudha' state is that state of mind in which there is no mental flux of any kind. It is a kind of trance like state of bliss and happiness. The last two states of mind are called 'Satvik' qualities of the creature.

(7) The five Basic Elements and their Manifestations:—According to the philosophy of the Upanishads, the entire creation is made up of five basic elements called the 'Bhuts'. These, in different permutations and combinations, combine to reveal themselves as the creation, both animate as well as inanimate.

According to Trishikhi Brahmano-panishad, 1/5, these elements are located in various paths of the body of a man and control the different functions as follows—

(A) Sky Element e.g. (i) Antahakaran (discriminatory intellect and wisdom), (ii) Mana (mind), (iii) Buddhi (intelligence), (iv) Chitta (intellect, memory, recollection, concentration) and (v) Ahankar (ego, pride, haughtiness, hypocrisy, arrogance). Its colour is light blue. it extend uptil the top of the head. It is located between the nostrils and the top of the head.

(B) Wind Element e.g. (i) Samaan (the vital wind controlling equal distribution of nourishment and circulation), (ii) Udan (wind moving upwards; controls expectoration), (iii) Vyan (wind that pervades throughout the body; maintains equilibrium), (iv) Apaan (wind passing down the intestine; controls ingestion, digestion and excretion of food) and (v) Pran (breath). Its colour is grey and it resembles smoke or haze. It is located between the navel and the nostrils.

(C) Fire element and Organs of perception, such as—(i) ears, (ii) skin, (iii) eyes, (iv) tongue and (v) nose. Its colour is red like vermillion and its shape is like tongues of flame. It is located between the groins and the navel in the middle and the lower part of the abdomen.

(D) Water element and Senses of perception—(i) hearing, (ii) touch, (iii) sight, (iv) taste and (v) smell. Its colour is silvery white and it is shaped like the crescent moon. It is located between the lower abdomen and knees.

(E) Earth element and Organs of action— (i) mouth, (ii) hands, (iii) legs, (iv) anus and (v) genitals. Its colour is light yellow and it has 4 corners. It is located between the sole of the feet up to the knees.

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There is a slight variation in the points of the body where these elements are located as described in Jabal Darshan Upanishad, 8/4-6. According to it, the 'sky' element is found between the eyebrows and the skull, the 'wind' element between the eyebrows and the chest, the 'fire' element between the chest and the groins, the 'water' element between the groin and the knee, and the 'earth' element from knee downwards. These two versions are diagrammatically shown by means of sketches at the end of this appendix.

(8) Mantra :—While going through the main text of the book, we come across the word Mantra repeatedly. What are they? In a layman's language, as we have seen, Mantras are either a single letter, a syllable or a group of letters or syllables forming a word, a group of words, even a phrase or a short statement—which we can call a 'spiritual formulae'. They are a unique and potentially uplifting, energy-charged thought currents. These currents are transformed into words to make them useable and accessible. For the purpose of God-realisation (or realisation of the supreme Brahm), these Mantras are used in meditation repeatedly to help concentrate the mind. These are called Mantras because by proper contemplation on their import, they are able to remove the inner obstacles and facilitate realisation. They are catalysts or mediums for realisation. They help in reaching of the supreme Advaitic ideal of identifying the Atma with the Brahm, the individual self with the universal Self. The Mantras are the vehicles used during Japa (repetition of the holy name of the Lord) also. But it must be emphasised here that even as any formula—whether in the realm of science or mathematics—is useful only when the student understands its meaning and application, the Mantras too, being spiritual formulas themselves, would be beneficial only when their meaning and import are fully understood. Though, off course, even as learning by rote can enable a student to mug up Chapters of a book to pass an examination without being able to answer one single question based on reasoning on the same subject that he has parroted, so the Mantras do have their impact when repeated blindly, but the benefit is only superficial. It is better than nothing but is not wholesome; they don't lead to self awakening as such. The Mantras are the vehicle which the aspirant uses to travel from the plane of the world to spiritual plane because Mantras can be repeated even while a person goes on with his daily chores, but his subconscious mind

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dwells not on the objects of the world but on the objects of the divine. In due course of time, this has a profound psychological impact on the aspirant. Gradually he seems to identity himself more with the divine principles than with the humdrum worldly principles. The seeker/aspirant gradually veers himself away from worldly entanglements and engages himself with spiritual discipline. First it's external and then it becomes internal. Even as a medicine taken over a long period of time eradicates a disease, the constant repetition of the Mantras tend to scrub his subconscious clean of all negative traits and replace them with divine traits.

The science of various Mantras was derived from the profundity about the ethereal and sublime knowledge of the universal and omnipresent cosmic sound. The specific structure or configuration of letters and syllables of a Mantra can be regarded as coded compilation of great spiritual doctrines or a cryptic metaphysical formulae of great import; the rhythmic chanting or repeating of which with due diligence, dedication, mental concentration, consistent and persistent pace and practice generates specific energy currents present in the cosmic ether in the form of the cosmic sound.

First let us understand the sonic power of some of the basic vowel sounds used in the scriptures and which form part of Mantras. The various combinations of these vowel sounds have as many special effects and create as many energy sources as are possible by their various permutations and combinations. Each syllable or letter of a Mantra stands for a particular aspect of this energy field, which the scriptures prefer to call 'God'. The 'Akshamaliko-panishad of Rig Veda' has bestowed and empowered each alphabet with divine and spiritual powers and threaded them together in a string called the 'prayer rosary'.

Some of the basic vowel sounds of Sanskrit/Hindi and their effects are enumerated as follows :—(i) A—Pronouncing this vowel has a direct effect on the heart. The pumping of the heart and the supply of pure blood in the body is supported by this sound. Repeated loud pronunciation at regulated amplitude helps to regulate pure blood supply to the body and keep the heart tuned. It possesses creative powers.

(ii) Aa—The sound of this vowel effects the chest and upper parts

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of the lungs. It strengthens ribs, helps clean the digestive canal and energises the mind because to pronounce it, the mouth has to be opened wide, enabling fresh air laden with oxygen to enter the body and oxidise the tissues.

(iii) E and Ee —Pronunciation of the short and long sound of the 3rd and 4th vowels have a direct effect on the throat, almost like a gargle. It cleanses the upper chamber of the respiratory tract as well as the alimentary canal. It helps to relieve headaches.

(iv) U or Oo—The short and long vowel sound of 'Oo' have direct effect on the organs in the middle and lower part of the body (i.e. abdomen)—e.g. liver, stomach, lower intestine and bowels because abdominal muscles are used to pronounce it. Constipation is relieved by prolonged pronunciation of this vowel sound.

(v) Ae and Aye—These two vowel sounds effect the kidney and the junction of the throat and the respiratory tract. It can relieve renal disease. It softens vocal cords, hence it is useful for those who use the voice much—e.g. teachers, singers, orators etc.

(vi) O and Ao—This vowel sound effects the genitals and the central part of the chest.

(vii) Ang—This is pronounced by opening and closing the throat. The oxygen inhaled when the mouth is open and fresh air is trapped inside the body helps in oxidising the RBC (red blood corpuscles) which, in turn, oxidises the tissue.

(viii) Aha—The pronunciation of this vowel sound titillates the tongue and the upper part of the palate. It regulates secretions of hormones which in turn regulate the various functions of the body.

Vocal sound and five elements :—Prof. Dobson has hypothesized that the primary speech of the human race must have originated using these vowel sounds. The 'wind' is a medium for propagation of sound. Air controls the type or genre, quality, amplitude and tune of sound—as is evident from a whistle, a flute or a mouth organ. The 'water' is also a medium of propagating sound as is done by marine creatures and some musical instruments using water such as the 'Jal Tarang'. The relation of sound with 'fire' consisting of light and heat as its elementary constituents is evident in the functioning of the tono-meter, spectro-meter and thermo-meter. Its subtle effect on the mind is an

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example of 'heated exchange of words' during an argument. The 'space' element and its relationship with sound are evidenced by music and the cosmic 'Naad'.

Benjamin Lee Whorf, an American scholar and chemical engineer, researched the psychological aspects of language and published his findings. 'The idea, entirely unfamiliar to the modern world, that nature and language are inwardly akin, was for ages well known to various high cultures. In India, one aspect of it has been the idea of the Mantra and of a Mantric art. On the simplest cultural level, a Mantra is merely an incantation of primitive magic, such as the crudest cultures have. In high culture it may have a different, intellectual meaning, dealing with the inner affinity of language and the cosmic order. At a still higher level, it becomes Mantra Yoga. Therein the Mantra becomes a manifold of conscious patterns, contrived to assist the consciousness into the nominal pattern world, whereupon it is 'in the driver's seat'. It can set the human organism to transmit, control and amplify thousand-fold forces which that organism normally transmits only at unobservable low intensities.'

The space or sky is the habitat of the cosmos; even our earth is nothing more than a speck or a grain of sand in this vast cosmos. Since the cosmos is filled with ether, which is completely infused with 'Naad', we are completely drenched by it, completely submerged in it. The ether is a gigantic ocean of sound waves. Sound is also the first source of energy; its combination with light lies at the root of generation of different types of energy currents and particles of matter.

In a more practical term, our body represents that vast cosmos. The space inside the skin made of earth is filled with water, air and fire. When we speak, our vocal cords create the cosmic 'Naad' in its microcosmic form, and we call it speech.

The scriptures affirm that OM, the sublime sound, is the source of all creation which has its base in it. The word OM is said to be the base/foundation and the basis/origin of all Mantras because Mantras consist of letters and syllables, and these are various forms that sound takes. Since sound has its origin in the 'Naad', hence OM is the 'seed or root' of all the Mantras. All syllables, letters, Mantras and words have emanated from the vibrations of the primordial sound called the 'Naad'.

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Components of Mantras :—The Mantras consists of (i) Vowels which are continuous sounds and (ii) Consonants which are interruptions of those sounds. The consonants cannot be pronounced without the vowels. As we know, sound travels in waves, and when similar waves of the same frequency overlap each other, they gain tremendous strength and are magnified. The super imposition of compatible waves or vibration have profound effect, and that is why chanting of the Mantras in chorus as done in Kirtan or recitation of Mantras during ancient fire sacrifices creates specific sound vibrations which can dispel negative energy and have great impact on the environment.

The five components of Mantra are the following :—(i) Rishi, (ii) Chanda, (iii) Devta (God), (iv) Bija (root) and (v) Tatva (essence, gist). The first component (Rishi) contains the name of the sage/seer who had discovered, compiled and mastered that particular Mantra and was therefore an authority of that field. The second component (Chanda) indicates the rhythmic composition for the pronunciation of the Mantra. This component creates the physical sound or the sonic energy which empowers the Mantra with physical potent and sustentative effect. The third component (Devata or the chosen deity) is the specific God-head that is aimed to be worshipped and realised with that Mantra. In other words, it is the bull's eye at which the energised arrow is being targeted. The God, in this context, can be defined as the specific cosmic field at which the frequency generated by the chanting (Japa) of a particular Mantra is directed even as specific broadcasting radio station use specific frequencies targeted to a particular area of the globe or a satellite in space. It is a very scientific concept. That is why if we wish to worship, say, Sri Ram, then we have to use Mantras dedicated to him alone. The fourth component (Bija-root) indicates the origin of the Mantra. It is a group of those syllables that contain, in compact coded form, the essence or gist of the Mantra, and thereby it implies the existence of latent energy or power in that Mantra. The fifth component (Tatva-essence) indicates the inherent potential powers and prowess of the Mantra, the purpose for which it should be used, and is like the meaning of a formula without which it can't be wisely used.

(9) Japa—The importance of Japa (repetition of holy name or divine letter of the Mantra) is succinctly explained by Swami Vivekanand

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when he says, 'The inaudible repetition of the Mantra, accompanied with the thinking of its meaning, is called mental repetition and is the highest type of Japa' (Complete Works, 1/190). His Guru, the enlightened Sri Ram Krishna said, 'Japa means silently repeating God's name in solitude. When you chant his holy name with single minded devotion, you can see (visualise) his form and realise him. It is like reaching a piece of timber (e.g. a log of wood) floating in water and attached to the bank with a chain. By holding the chain and moving forward, link by link, you can reach the log. In the same way, by repeating God's holy name, you become absorbed in him and finally realise him' (Gospel of Ram Krishna, 878-9).

Japa of the Mantra has basically three forms—audible (with proper pronunciation), inaudible (just by moving of the lips) and mental (without any external sign of repetition). The last is the best way as endorsed by Swami Vivekanand himself as above.

Regarding continual Japa of the Mantra, we must remember what Swami Vivekanand had said, 'Each deity chosen by the seeker (called his Ishta Devata) has a specific Mantra (even as each man has a specific name; it is like the relevant God's signature tune). The Mantra is the external word to express the particular ideal that the deity stands for. Constant repetition of the word helps to fix the ideal firmly in the mind' (Complete Works, 7/63) because 'as thou thinkest, so art thou' (Complete Works, 6/90—a reference to Buddha's Sermon on the Mount).

The benefit of constant Japa of Mantras can also be explained as follows—the consciousness of a man exists in three states, viz. the waking state, the dreaming state and the deep sleep state. During the waking state, the conscious is so engrossed in performing the functions of perceptions and feelings linked with the gross body that it remains bogged down in the narrow domain of physical experiences. But when this conscious is trained to do another task simultaneously with this routine function of worldly perceptions and feelings, it can perform this new task easily with due practice. For example, it is possible for a man to train his mind to do routine, monotonous task without making an error while listening to music. On the contrary, this additional task makes his routine activities less tiring and boring because the consciousness gets detached from the usual experiences of the physical

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body and become relatively free for some time to focus on the other task at hand—which is listening to music or repeating the Mantra, which in their turn have a soothing effect on the tired nerves. Now, this repetition forms the background record of the subconscious or the memory bank of the mind. So, when the consciousness is in the second state of existence, that is the dreaming state, it dreams of those subjects which have been stored in its memory bank— the various inputs from the world as well as the constant psychological impact of the Mantras. The effect is obvious— the dreams become influenced by the latter influences. Finally, in the third state of deep sleep when neither the external stimuli nor the activity of the mind affect the consciousness, it (consciousness) can enjoy the sub conscious without any restraint. It is here that the Mantras, positive thinking, good or bad thoughts etc. come into play.

It is like the activation of the inner mind (sub conscious) of the man. And this is why it is emphasised that the Mantras have effect only when their meaning and import are understood because when this inner mind is activated, it comes in direct contact with the consciousness. The more erudite and classified the sub conscious, the more elevated the inner-self becomes. Just like the personality of a man is effected by, inter alia, his surroundings and circumstances, this inner-self is also enhanced or degraded in stature due to this sub conscious. Mantras, with their meanings understood (and stored in the sub conscious), uplift this inner-self of the creature. The creature becomes more spiritual and divine because it is guided by the 'inner mind' to identify itself more closely with the pure and divine Spirit (Atma/soul) in him. This Spirit is the emperor of the whole set up— it is pure consciousness, an entity that is the reporting authority for the sub conscious.

Chanting of Mantras is like caressing —gentle but intense —of the heart and the mind. When one chants softly, one's emotions become more gentle and soft, refined and elevated. Chanting or doing Japa of Mantras help to subdue or calm agitations of the mind and control it. It acts as a balm over ruffled nerves of the mind.

There is another school of thought that says that Mantras need not have a meaning, need not be understood to be effective. According to this line of thought, Mantras resemble the cosmic sound, which

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according to the scriptures, was the origin of the whole cosmos. These Mantras incorporate certain sound codes that could generate specific energies because sound waves have energy. That is why different Mantras are prescribed for different uses because the specific energy needed to deal with a given set of problems will be generated by a given set of syllables producing a given set of sound waves or sonic codes.

In mythological lore, the ancient sages heard these syllables which represented the cosmic sound called 'Naad' in their inner-self in a state of trance. That is why most of the Mantras are called 'Srutis'—things that were heard and not consciously created as meaningful words. They were, in effect, a compilation of sound-elements heard or conceptualised by intuition.

Sir John Woodroffe, in his book 'The garland of letters' describes the origin of Mantras as follows—'The Mantras are sonic patterns which represent in themselves and in all their variations all the possibilities of articulate speech in all languages'.

The chanting of the Mantras during ritual ceremonies is in a group following a specific rhythm while during individual repetition (Japa) it can be a simple murmur or done in absolute silence where the Mantra is repeated in the mind. The constant and persistent chanting and repeating of the Mantra produces a continuous stream of sound waves. Continuous Japa will create a halo of energy around the aspirant. Modern research of sound energy—especially ultrasonic— has proved that vibration at a high frequency can produce enormous amount of energy that can convert the surrounding material into vapour and ash almost instantaneously. The sound generated by the Mantras are originally subtler in level than the ultrasound, but the brain's electrical energy and strength of concentration can amplify the frequency of sound waves to beyond the limits of ultrasound. That is why ancient sages could turn to ashes anyone and anything by chanting a set of Mantras if they wished to do so. Ample examples are available in ancient texts where kings and Gods feared the wrath of sages and seers just for this reason.

Like electromagnetic waves can be captured by an appropriate instrument, e.g. radar or a dish, the sound wave energy can also be captured by the body, and the instrument here are the ear and the

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skin. There are many instances where creatures of the animal kingdom can receive sound impulses through their skin (e.g. snakes, earthworms). Similarly, the Mantras create a particular set of sonic wave energy that can alter the behavioral patterns of the reception centers of the objects which are targeted by the Mantras. No wonder than that ancient sages used to chant Mantra for rainfall, for good harvest, for the general well-being of the society, to cast off diseases because the germs causing the diseases were either rendered ineffective or killed (e.g. in today's world, there are electronic mosquito and insect repelling electronic devices that emit ultra sonic sounds which stupefies the insect or the mosquito and it either flies off or drops dead).

In the spiritual realm, therefore, the Mantras act like radio frequencies and help the creature to establish its link with the cosmic energy field which we call 'God' and communicate with it. By extension, this one way communication established by the Mantra can be upgraded to a two way communication between the God and the creature by the means of Dhyan so that the seeker/aspirant can communicate with his chosen God.

The practice of repetition is popular because you can recite even though you can't read the text, you can repeat and recite even if your body can't endure the physical demands of meditation and rigors of spiritual practices, you can repeat and recite Mantras even while walking, breathing, cooking, waiting in a queue etc. You can recite even amid the din of the mundane world. What is required here is firm faith, conviction and determination. The good medicine imbibed will have its effects notwithstanding your literacy or ignorance in the intricate details of the medical book, as it were.

(10) Yoga :—The dictionary meaning of the word is 'to join, a junction point, to attach, harness, to team with, to put together, to fix any union, to foster, to connect, suitability or compatibility of two or more things'. It also means 'to strive, endeavour, due diligence and industry; to concentrate, meditate, contemplate and focus the mind and thought on some abstraction; self restraint and channelising one's vital strength and energy in a particular direction'. The process of concentration, contemplation and meditation as envisioned by the Upanishads needed a well-disciplined mind and body. For this to happen, a set of exercises were devised—called the various 'Aasans

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and Bandhas' (sitting postures and controlling of the vital functions of the body). So, taken purely in its modern concept, it refers to the regime of different exercises, but on a broader plane its main objectives is to enable the aspirant to meditate and focus his energy on self purification, self elevation and self realisation. The fact that these exercises help eliminate —or at least alleviate —so many aliments that afflicts a body in today's stressful life is an additional bonus, but not the aim of Yoga, though of course a healthy body is definitely conducive in spiritual practice.

The chief expcnent of Yoga was sage **Patanjali**, and he had crystallised the principles of Yoga in his **'Yog Sutra'** which contains 185 Sutras or formulas or keys for doing Yoga. Yoga is one of the 6 schools of Indian Hindu Philosophy. We shall now briefly see the essential elements of Patanjali's Yog Sutra.

Patanjali is considered the grandfather of Yoga. Here we shall see in brief his basic ideas of Yoga, and we would observe that they are more philosophical in their content, import and application than the mere physical exercise involved in doing routine Yoga (meditation). Patanjali's philosophies on Yoga are universally applicable to all the Upanishads, whether they are mere philosophical treatises or the ones dealing with only meditation exercises in detail. In the context of Upanishads on Yoga, let us have a brief glimpse on what sage 'Patanjali', has to say on the subject.

'Patanjali' has enumerated 8-fold path of Yoga, called Ashtanga Yoga. Each phase of his prescription is designed to enable the practioner to attain the supreme consciousness by quieting the mind and merging it with the truth which is universal, all pervading and infinite. The eight paths or steps are the following:—

(i) Yam—broadly meaning self restraint and it covers such virtues as non-violence (Ahinsa), honesty and truthfulness (Stya), abhorring theft (Asteya), abstinence, celibacy and detachment from passions (Brahmacharya), and non-accumulation and non-possession (Aparigraha).

(ii) Niyam—or observance of principles or codes of conduct. Such as having good habits and contentment, observing austerities and penances, self-study of scriptures, following a righteous, virtuous and noble way of life etc.

(ii) Aasan —the various postures of the body adopted while doing

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Yoga or meditation. This is the physical aspect of Yoga. The various postures are designed to free the body from toxins, and they calm down the body as well as the mind which is trained to focus on Brahm or Atma, which is pure and infinite consciousness and a fount of light and enlightenment, instead of wandering aimlessly and getting entangled in a web of miseries and confusions represented by this world.

(iv) Pranayam —the control of the life-giving fresh breath or the vital wind force of life called Pran. It helps remove distractions and agitations of the mind, removes the various toxins present in the blood, opens up clogged veins and arteries, relaxes the nerves, and ultimately helps to elevate both the body and the mind. It activates and re-energies the battery of the body.

(v) Pratyahar —this is the state of withdrawal of the mind from agitations caused by the stimuli-inputs reaching it from the five sensory organs of perception of the body, which act like radars collecting various information from the outside world. With the lack of inputs, i.e. the radar going blank, the mind does not have to bother itself about the output, which is the control of the organs of action. Hence, it finds time and energy to relax and contemplate and ponder upon other more important matters of life such as the spiritual and ethereal rather than spending its energy in the humdrum, routine work of the world.

(vi) Dhaarna —it means training of the mind to focus on one point; it is concentration of the mind as opposed to its constant state of being in a flux, always volatile and restless. It helps sharpen the intellect and empowers it with tremendous potentials like the rays of laser — precise, incisive, sharp, powerful, effective and surgical in nature. It also refers to firm conviction, belief and faith.

(vii) Dhyan —uninterrupted contemplation and meditation without an object used as a medium to concentrate the mind. The intention here is to heighten awareness of the pure-self and to establish oneness with the macro-soul of the cosmos. It results in the achievement of calmness, peace and tranquility. The practical benefit in life is the calmness and serenity achieved by a seeker/aspirant during the process of Dhyan, and this calmness and tranquility spills over into all other aspects of life, thereby strengthening the emotional, intellectual and spiritual fabric of the creature.

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(viii) Samadhi —it is the final step and final stage of meditation, and it is a trance-like state of existence wherein the creature remains virtually awake in this world, but on a subtle plane he remains totally oblivious of the existence of the surrounding gross world. This Samadhi leads to bliss and happiness. In this state, the seeker/aspirant merges himself with the supreme Self, which is the real Truth and absolute Reality. Such people become truly enlightened souls who have developed union with their parent, the Brahm.

According to Skanda Puran, the 'Yam and Niyam' mentioned above are ten, and they are the following:—(a) the 10 Yams—truthfulness, forgiveness, simplicity, Dhyan (meditation, concentration of the mind), lack of cruelty (or presence of compassion and mercy), forsaking violence, restraint of mind and sense organs, pleasant demeanours and sweet towards all); (b) the 10 Niyams— cleanliness/ablution, bath (purification of body), Tapa (austerities, penances, sufferings), alms and charities, keeping silence, Yagya (sacrifices, religious rituals), self study, observance of vows, keeping fasts, celibacy. (Skanda Puran, Bra. Dha. Ma. 5/19-21

All these limbs of Yoga work together in unison. The 1st five steps are mainly concerned with tuning the body and mind leading to its focus on the truth in the 6th and the 7th steps. The integration of the body, mind and soul into one spiritual whole, and removing of the barrier between the microcosmic Atma/soul of the individual and the macrocosmic Atma/soul of the cosmos is achieved, resulting in ultimate felicity and beatitude of the 8th step.

The four Paths of Yoga :—It is pertinent to note here that the main thrust of Yoga is to establish a union between the conscious Atma of an individual and the conscious Atma of the cosmos. There are other schools of philosophy for this 'conscious realisation'.

There are said to be four main paths of Yoga which lead to self realisation in a man or makes him aware of the super conscious residing in him. They are—(i) Gyan Yoga, (ii) Bhakti Yoga, (iii) Karma Yoga and (iv) Raj Yoga.

(i) Gyan Yoga involves the intellect and mind to determine and delineate the true and the false; it helps to access and understand the reality and falsehood behind the manifested visible world which appears to be 'real' but is actually like a 'shadow of the truth'. This Gyan Yoga helps to establish the mind firmly into seeing unity in

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diversity. Those following Gyan Yoga are called 'seers' because they can 'see' beyond the visible, multifarious and bewildering variety of this false world. Gyan Yoga is in the realm of the intellect and discriminating mind of a creature.

(ii) Bhakti Yoga refers to having devotion for a chosen Godhead who is a person's ideal, on whom he showers all his adoration, and on whom he focuses his attention. He is emotionally and sentimentally involved with his deity. Hence, the heart is the realm of Bhakti Yoga; it helps to commune with the divine.

(iii) Karma Yoga expounds on the importance of doing deeds and taking actions, but with a different attitude. It stresses that we must not get 'involved or attached' to those deeds or action in as much as we shouldn't be bothered about the rewards or punishments incumbent on such deeds or actions. We must do them dispassionately and with detachment. The action or deed should be treated as one's offering to the God as well as an offering to the sacred fire sacrifice. This will ensure that the actions or deeds are not unrighteousness, corrupt or evil. On the contrary, whatever is done in which a person's subtle sub-conscious says is not the correct thing to do will be deemed to be unrighteous, unethical and unlawful, and therefore cannot be an offering to either the God or the sacred fire sacrifice.

(iv) Raj Yoga is the psycho-spiritual practice of exercise and breath control; it involves the various steps involved in meditation and contemplation, as is generally understood by the term Yoga. This Yoga lays emphasis on physical training of the body and the mind, and is the subject matter of numerous Upanishads dealing with such exercises (e.g. Yog Chudamani of Sam Veda). It deals with such subjects as Pranayam, purification and activation of Naadis, kindling of Chakras (subtle energy centers in the body) etc.

These four types of Yogas are not mutually exclusive; they coalesce and overlap with each other and their main aim is to help the aspirant seeker in his pursuit of 'self realisation'.

(11) The concept of Samadhi :—Contemplation and meditation lead to Samadhi. Yogis also experience supreme bliss during Samadhi. Simply put, it is a trance like state when the consciousness has no perception of the external, physical world of sense objects and, on the contrary, it experiences the bliss of the pure self. This leads to an ecstatic state.

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The term Samadhi is derived from the Sanskrit root 'Dha' which means to put or to place. To this root are added prefixes 'Sam' (well) and 'Aa' (fully). Thus the word Samadhi means 'putting or placing the mind fully well'. In Vedanta, Samadhi means the knowledge that identifies the Atma with Brahm. It is commonly used to mean 'absorption or meditation'. The state of Samadhi is free from the dual defects (faults) of duality (that the creature and Brahm are separate) and effort (diligence in deeds and actions aimed towards the goal). That is, during the state of Samadhi, the creature looses its self independent identity and no effort is then required to experience the bliss of the supreme realisation of the absolute Truth— which is the Atma and Brahm are the same, are infinite and eternal.

There are two types of Samadhis— (i) Savikalpa Samadhi (absorption characterised by the perception of division, distinction or difference) and (ii) Nirvikalpa Samadhi (absorption free from division, distinction or difference). The Savikalpa Samadhi is reached after long practice of the tenet 'I am Brahm' (i.e. there is no difference between me and Brahm). Unlike this practice wherein the seeker had to exert himself to maintain the thought that 'I am Brahm', during the Savikalpa Samadhi there is an effortless thought of 'I am Brahm'. This Samadhi is characterised by the perception of the distinction of the triumvirate consisting of (a) Meditator (Dhyatra), (b) Meditated object (Dheya) and (c) Meditation process (Dhyan). Though the Meditator has withdrawn his mind from all thoughts and maintains a continuous flow of a single pointed thought that 'I am Brahm', he still continues to have the distinction between (a) I, the Meditator, (b) the Object, that I am Brahm and (c) the very physical act of meditation. Nevertheless, by virtue of the strength of knowledge that 'he is Brahm', the triumvirate becomes illusionary or imaginary just like the perception of various shapes of water— such as whirlpool, wave, bubble, foam/froth etc. are noting else but water, or the water in a cup, a glass, a jar, a tray, a pond, a lake, a river, and ocean may have different names and contours but are water nonetheless.

Sri Sankaracharya has cited the example of a clay elephant (Sarva Vedanta Siddhanta Saar Sangraha, verse nos. 821-822) to say that the elephant form does appear inspite of the knowledge that it is, after all, clay. Similarly, inspite of the knowledge that everything is Brahm, the triumvirate does exist in Savikalpa Samadhi.

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Nirvikalpa Samadhi— during this state, the ideal that I am the all-pervading Brahm takes firm root and it puts an end to all ignorance. The term means 'no division or distinction or difference'. Here the seeker has no distinction between the triad of meditator or meditated object and the process of meditation.

The main difference between these two Samadhis is that in the former there is the 'knowledge or awareness' that I am Brahm while in the latter it is the 'being' of I am Brahm. The difference of knowing and being is quit evident. It is one thing to theoretically 'know' that I am Brahm and quite different to 'be' Brahm. When the thought I am Brahm becomes effortless and complete, the meditator loses the distinction between himself, the object (Brahm) and the process (meditation) — all merge into one entity. In this Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the meditator loses the distinction between himself (I) and the object (Brahm). As a result, the ego that 'I am meditating upon Brahm' is vanished, and with it, the triad. By extension, it means 'there is no experience of distinction between the knower (meditator) and the known (Brahm)'.

In Savikalpa Samadhi, the thought 'I am Brahm' is available for perception while in Nirvikalpa Samadhi, the same thought is not available for perception. A lump of salt floating in water will be seen as distinct from water (Savikalpa Samadhi) but when that lump of salt dissolves in water, no one can see it; there is no distinction between the water and the salt (Nirvikalpa Samadhi).

The Nirvikalpa Samadhi is the plunging of the consciousness into the ocean of bliss encapsulated inside the causal body of the creature. All ignorance pertaining to the world is dispelled and therefore the world comes to an end simply because it exists only due to ignorance. Age, caste, position, opinion— none of these is a bar in entering the chamber of the self during Samadhi. It is open to all who seek it.

To conclude, we can say that Samadhi means that state when the seeker attains the last stage in meditation when there is no agitation, and its place is taken over by utter silence or trance like state. In that silence, the cessation of the flow of thoughts results in annihilation of the mind, and with it, the body. When the thought processes cease, there can be no discrimination taking place. When discrimination ceases, the intellect cannot exist. Hence, in that final moment of silence,

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when the mind and intellect are dissolved—the thoughts are vanquished, the mind is conquered, discrimination is absent and the intellect is annihilated—the erstwhile individual merges with the infinite reality, resulting in supreme and endless bliss and beatitude.

(12) The words **Contemplation and Meditation** have some aspects which are common to both and some aspects which are different. Let us have a brief glimpse at both of them.

The dictionary describes 'contemplation' as— to reflect and consider, to look at attentively, to study, and to intend calmly. This is the meaning of the word in its transitive verb form. The intransitive verb meaning is— to think seriously, attentive viewing. As a noun it means— a matter of thought. A contemplative mind is one which is inclined to think deeply on any matter; it is the opposite of an impulsive, reckless and restless mind. It is 'pondering on any subject, to weigh the pros and cons of any subject in the mind carefully'.

But this deep attention and pondering should be discriminative in nature because a person has to have interest in any subject to be able to focus his attention on it for any length of time. The trick is to be 'positively discriminative', that is to focus the attention on positive aspects of life rather than the degrading and demoralising negative aspects, and even in the positive sphere, trying to delve deeper and deeper in to reality, and rise higher and higher in understanding of the ultimate Truth.

The word contemplation is derived from the Latin word contemlare which means 'to gaze attentively'. In the mystical and spiritual sense, it means 'knowledge consisting in the partial or complete identification of the knower with the object of knowledge with the resultant loss of the person's own individuality'. Since individualism is lost, the person begins to identify himself with the larger canvas of existence in the form of the cosmic Nature. This identification of the individual with the cosmos is synonymous with the identification of his soul called the Spirit with the supreme Soul or Universal Spirit called Brahm.

Sankaracharya defines it as follows in his commentary on Brihadaranyak Upanishad 1/3/9— 'contemplation (Upasana) is reaching by the mind using the guidance of the intellect something delineated by the Upanishads, concentrating on it, uninterrupted by other thoughts, until identity with that thing is imagined in the same

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degree in which identity is imagined by us with the physical body now'.

The main emphasis of contemplation is on refining and sharpening a person's instruments of perception and tuning the mind so that it can perceive the reality behind the facade of variety, a facade which might be illusionary. It is looking inwards in order to grasp the nature of activity going on in the mind-intellect complex. Further, the Katha Upanishad clearly specifies the need for contemplation by saying, 'a rare person who can exercise discrimination and seek immortality, turns his eyes away from worldly object and then sees the pure self residing in his bosom' (Katha Upanishad, 2/1/1). The main aim of contemplation in the spiritual sphere is to effect correspondence of the subject (the seeker) with the object (the Atma).

The word 'meditation' in the context of the mind and intellect means, on the other hand, 'to consider thoughtfully, to revolve in the mind'. Thus, outwardly both the words appear to mean the same. Both involve concentration and focus on a subject as the main theme. But then divergence starts at this point. Contemplation is done in the mind-intellect complex of the creature. It requires little or no physical exercise or minimal focused and diligent involvement of the physical body. Contemplation requires steadfastness of mind, persistent and consistent efforts and deep attention of the mind without which focusing of it is not possible. A focused mind acquires the precision and prowess of a laser beam; it become precise and surgical, it becomes penetrating and potent. Contemplation induces the urge to explore the dimension of 'silence' as well as 'meditation'. It confers a quietness and steadiness in demeanours. It leads to spontaneous self-restraint and puts a leash on the process of verbalisation which is so characteristic of a modern man and an exercise which is nothing more than a waste of his vital energy.

There are four main functions of the mind— sensing, feeling, thinking and contemplating. By sensing, the mind perceives the world around it through the medium of the sense organs and its ability to respond to stimuli through the organs of action. By feeling, the mind experiences the senses of joy and pleasures, or sorrows and pains, or love and anger. These two functions (sensing and feeling) are the job of the mind. The function of thinking is taken over by the intellect;

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this intellect is the boss of the mind, as it were. Whereas the mind is the clerk, the intellect is the supervisor. By thinking, the intellect, with the assistance from the mind, tries to understand and decipher the true nature of the world, the inputs of the sense organs and decides on their proper responses. Thinking relies a lot on the memory bank of the mind-intellect complex to take a decision. Finally, by contemplation, the intellect takes some time off in private and thinks deeply, intently, weighing the pros and cons of any matter which are not part of routine day to day work of the complex. Thinking therefore leads to contemplation— the intellect tries to unravel the mystery around it and so it thinks and thinks deeper and still deeper in a process we shall call contemplation.

For example, a person may learn any chapter like a parrot, but he needs to think to answer searching questions on it. Contemplation, as explained earlier, inspires him to think beyond the apparent lessons of the chapter— to search for those aspects which are just not covered in the lesson. They require further investigation, research, pondering, quest and to look ahead. It is deeper than simple thinking.

Meditation, on the other hand, is a more physical exercise involving several time-tested practical techniques such as controlling of the breath, focusing of the mind on some image, spot or sound (even music). These exercise are part of Yoga. A vagrant and agitated mind is forcefully pinned down on an object so as to calm it down. The mind, in this state, is conscious and aware of the agitations and is directing the body to calm down. The intellect is guiding the mind to calm down its agitations.

The difference between contemplation and meditation is evident here. However, it will be naive to separate them into two distinct compartments because both activities or functions overlap each other, are inter-dependent, and one unit must work in tune with the other in order to produce any viable effect. For example, we cannot say a gear and a clutch of a car are independent of each other, though strictly speaking they are so in technical terms. Without pressing the clutch, it is not possible to change the gear of the vehicle— both of them must work in harmony in order to make the car move.

Meditative practices can alter a person's health, mental state, emotions and individual identity, and provide him with calmness of

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mind and heart, virtuous and noble demeanours, a sense of well-being and a purpose of life. But meditation, when it is purely physical exercise, is nothing more than a therapeutic avenue for an ailing body and mind. If the ultimate aim of meditation is simply treatment of a diseased body and mind, it will have minimal spiritual value. But if the aim is self-purification then it is a potent aide to contemplation whose main objective is kindling self-identification and self-realisation. For, without self purification, self-realisation is not possible. In this aspect, they are complementary to each other.

While meditating, a person goes through four successive states of existence— the waking, the dreaming, the deep sleep and the Turiya states of consciousness. It is in the 3rd stage that the person enjoys bliss and in the 4th stage he enjoys ecstasy and beatitude as well as feels oneness with the supreme Lord.

The human mind is like an onion—layers after layers cover the central kernel. The layers of the onion are like the various Vasanas or Virittis that surround the 'Truth' of the creature. Removal of these layers exposes the kernel-like pure inner self. Meditation helps in this external removal (or cleansing) process while contemplation helps to discover the magic of the onion itself— how the kernel was formed, how the various layers formed around it, and how a new onion is brought forth from the old one. This knowledge is given not by meditation but by contemplation. The whole concept is highlighted by this simple example of the onion.

The three Types of Meditation Techniques :—'No-dual' or 'Advaitic meditation varies according to temperament and aptitude of the aspirant. First there is enquiry about the self; this leads to contemplation and thence to meditation. Amongst the various meditation techniques is one known as 'Madhu Vidya' which trains the mind of the aspirant/seeker to peer and search or seek the truth beneath the coverings of various external objects. Some of these Vidyas are—Honey Vidya (Madhu Vidya), Sun Vidya (Aditya Vidya), and Fire Vidya (Agni Vidya). These three form the core of such meditation practices. These focus on the relationship between the macro and microcosm. During these techniques, the aspirant/seeker seeks to identify his own core of consciousness which is the manifested form of Brahm (or a Brahm with certain attributes). Take the example

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of Madhu Vidya, or meditating on Honey. This Honey is used as a metaphor for sweetness, the essence of nectar of flowers, of bliss and beatitude, of joy and felicity. The seeker contemplates thus — 'This earth is like honey for all beings, and all beings are like honey for this earth. The supreme, immortal, omniscient Soul that is at the core of the very existence of earth, and the intelligent, immortal and supreme Atma (soul) of the individual creature who lives on this earth —each of them is like the 'honey' to the other. Brahm is that Atma (soul). The Atma is the pure, conscious Self. And that is all' (Brihad Aranakya Upanishad, 2/5/1).

The successive steps of this Madhu Vidya, described in this Upanishad (Brihad Aranakya 2/5/2-2/5/19) are the following:— water, fire/energy, wind/air, Aditya/Sun, directions, moon, electric, clouds, sky/space, Dharma/righteousness, Truth, humans and the Atma —each focuses on the correlation between these individual elements at the micro level and enlarged to refer to their respective macrocosmic implication at the cosmic level. The same thread —Atma and Brahm —passes through all of them; it is the common thread which links everything in this creation.

The 'Madhu Vidya' was first enunciated by a Brahmin named Dadhyang Atharvan in favour of sages Awshwini Kumars (Brihad Aranakya Upanishad, 2/5/16-19), and then it was preached by sage Yagyawalkya to his wife Maitreyi before he took to Sanyas (Brihad Aranakya Upanishad, canto 2, Brahmin 5). Besides these two sages, Brihad Aranakya Upanishad 2/6/1-3 gives a long list of disciples and their learned teachers who were exponents of this 'Madhu Vidya'. The list culminates in Brahma, the creator who is also the creator of the Vedas, as the first teacher who preached it to the Viraat Purush or Vishnu at the time of creation.

The Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda tradition, in its canto 3, describes in detail the 'Aditya Vidya' or worship of the Sun as a pitcher of honey; it is a form or branch of Madhu Vidya. As we have seen, it is a means, a metaphor or a technique to contemplate upon the supremacy of the Atma and Brahm over the rest of everything else using the Sun and Honey as symbols or mediums to grasp the meaning of the supreme, sublime, eclectic and esoteric Truth. So all aspects of Nature listed above (such as earth, water, fire, sun, moon, sky etc.)

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can be used separately and the metaphor of honey can be applied to each of them to explain one basic truth — and that is, the only essence worth adoring, worshipping and paying attention to, worth contemplating and meditating upon, is the 'honey' which is metaphor for the Atma at micro level, and Brahm at macro level. Chandogya Upanishad describes the most profound of this Madhu Vidya in relation to the Sun and Fire in great detail in 3/1/1-3/11/3, 3/19/1—4, 4/10/4—4/14/1.

To conclude we may say that all these concepts are inter-dependent. All have to work in sync with each other to help the creature realise its may aim in life which, spiritually speaking, is the end of the cycle of birth and death, and of the final liberation from this world and merger with the parent source from where the soul of the creature had originally originated from— the Brahm, the universal spirit, the ultimate reality and the absolute truth.

Benefits of Meditation and contemplation:-We can say that meditation and contemplation are the two legs of spiritualism. Meditation prepares and trains the mind to contemplate. Contemplation helps the mind to meditate. It is a symbiotic relationship. The object of both these exercises is to determine the true identity of the Atma or the spirit residing in the bosom of the creature and the truth about ourselves and our surroundings. Both discipline the mind and unleash the tremendous potential of it. At the worldly plane, the benefits are the achievement of success in the field of 'Artha' (prosperity and well-being) and 'Kaam' (fulfillment of desires), at a higher plane it is success in 'Dharma' (righteousness, nobility of thought and conduct) and at a still higher level, it provides success in spiritual elevation to a state of contentedness, bliss, tranquility, beatitude, peace and happiness. The ultimate state of emancipation and salvation is the final trophy to be won. In mere physical terms, they help to maintain a healthy body and mind, a sharp intellect and a superior wisdom; they calm the body and brain which no medication can possibly do. These bestow honour and respect to its practioner in the society and make his life worthwhile.

The necessary **requirements**, or shall we say, qualities needed for contemplation to be successful, are the following— (i) restraining the external organs of actions and internal organs of perception. Reflection

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is only possible when there is silence and calmness. That is why the lesson learnt by a student during early morning hours are better grasped by him because the atmosphere is calm. The other necessities are—(ii) Tapa i.e. austerity, or diligence and industry without which any endeavour will fail. (iii) Swadhaya, i.e. self study of scriptures. Now this study does not mean learning by rote like a parrot, but it must be with understanding. (iv) Brahmcharya, i.e. celibacy. Here again, both physical celibacy as well as mental celibacy are needed. The former helps to preserve vital energy while the latter helps to keep agile and focus the brain. (v) Vijinasha, i.e. intense reflection, for this helps to unravel the truth and solve the mystery. (vi) Sradha, i.e. faith, belief and conviction. Here it refers to shying away from doubts, confusions, cynicism and undue pricking holes. (vii) Humility, i.e. lack of pride, ego, arrogance and haughtiness; this will make the seeker receptive to new ideas.

Brahm is obtainable by a purified intellect. Contemplation and meditation is a means to purify it. (Please see Chapter 1, Canto 4 of this book in this context.)

(13) Spirituality can be defined in this context as the elevation of the mind from a lower level of thinking to a higher level of thinking. The dictionary defines 'spirit' as 'a vital principle, the principle of thought, the soul/Atma present in the creature, an incorporeal being, the essence or chief element, a breath of wind or life'. Hence, spiritualism means 'to realise that nothing is real except the spirit/soul/Atma; the latter is a real entity and not something out of imagination, it has a real existence apart from matter'. So, spiritualism is to focus the mind away from the faulty and delusionary world and concentrate it on more important things about the Truth and essence of existence. It is an intellectual exercise, an awakening of the mind, as it were. And its tool is contemplation more than meditation.

A person who meditates and contemplates is actually a student and practioner of spiritualism. This student not only wishes to become a graduate but aims further ahead to become a post graduate, and still ahead to doing his doctoral thesis, that is rise higher and higher in pursuit of his chosen line of education. As the saying goes, 'a mango tree laden with ripe fruits bends towards the earth', such a person becomes humbler by the day; all his ego, pride and haughtiness gives

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way to humility, love and compassion. He becomes serene, calm, peaceful, dispassionate and detached. His mind is purified; it becomes subtle but razor sharp. He becomes a 'saint'

Constant practice, constant study, constant reflection and constant concentration are the four pillars leading to self-realisation and enlightenment. Therefore, both mediation and contemplation are followed by erudite ascetics, sages and seers even as two legs are needed by the body to walk properly.

Constant contemplation and meditation brings about a change in the personality of a man. In as much as the mind is involved in concentration and focusing of attention, whether in the realm of contemplation or meditation, the changes in the body's chemicals, physiology and electrical impulses emanating from the brain which can be duly recorded by EEG (electro encephalogram), indicate a positive trend. It has been scientifically proved that during meditation, the alpha-wave amplitude is increased. Similarly, the theta-wave activity in the front portion of the brain is also enhanced during contemplation. The increase of alpha and theta wave activities produces calmness, relaxation and loss of anxiety.

Meditation induces electrical harmony between the two lobes of the brain and improves bodily response to stressful situations as measured by heart rate, blood pressure, respiratory rate etc. Meditation also affects the biochemical equilibrium in the body for the betterment of the meditator— there is a reduced blood lactate levels (ensuring better transport of oxygen to all tissues), decreased cortisol (reducing stress) and cholesterol levels (reducing the chances of clogged arteries and veins) as well as an increase in high-density lipoprotein (which protect against heart disease).

While contemplation has more to do with the 'thinking' process, meditation is more akin to the 'concentration' process of the brain. Whereas the brain might think but this thinking has to be aided by concentration to have any long term affects. Therefore, instead of at being opposite to each other, both of these are supplementary and complementary. Once the brain decides to think (contemplate), it uses concentration (meditation) techniques to succeed in its efforts.

(14) Three Steps to Truth :—Vedanta philosophy says that there are three steps to realise the Truth—(i) 'Sravan' or hearing about the

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truth, (ii) 'Manan' or contemplation upon the truth, focusing the mind on it, and (iii) 'Nidhi Dhyasan' or meditation upon it.

(15) Dhyan :—The Sanskrit word Dhyan means 'to think or to cogitate'. Here it means both contemplation as well as meditation. The word also means 'attention, focus'. So, this word is generally understood in common parlance to be similar to contemplation and meditation, and it covers both the terms in its ambit.

The appropriate word for contemplation in Hindi would be 'Manan and Chintan' which will roughly mean 'deep thought, reflection, pondering and application of mind'. The Upanishads stress on this 'Chintan-manan' aspect of the mind-intellect when it talks about 'Dhyan'. Greatest of scientific discoveries were made more by intuition than anything else. That is why intuition is closely related to the so-called 'sixth sense' in a man, i.e. a state when the intuitive man knows what is the correct path to chose from a variety of options, and more often than not, he is correct. We can say that this 'intuition' is the guidance provided by the subtle soul/Atma of the creature. Not everybody is equally intuitive by nature; this is because some persons, by virtue of their past actions and deeds have a thicker layer of Vasanas and Vrittis surrounding their Atma while others have a thinner layer so that the voice coming out of the Atma is easily heard in the latter case while it is muzzled and suppressed in the former case.

Definition of Dhyan :—Patanjali Yogsutra has described 'Dhyan' as concentration. Dhyan is that state in which the inner mind tries to see the reality behind things. This 'thinking' process links it with contemplation while concentration function links it with meditation. According to Agni Puran, contemplation with a calm mind is Dhyan while Garud Puran has defined it as concentration on the Brahm. Dhyan, therefore, leads to enlightenment. Woodworth, in his book 'Psychology', writes that the mind concentrates on one impulse at a time and neglects others. So, Dhyan in this context means 'to become alert and activated for doing a work or seeing an object exclusively'. Dhyan is momentary in the beginning, but it becomes permanent later on with practice. Sidney Smith defines Dhyan as 'to forget everything else except the main objective'. Charles Dickens views Dhyan as 'useful, harmless, definite and a beneficial process of the mind'. According to Bergansa, 'suppression of external distractions is

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essential for the deepening expansion of Dhyan'. Edgar Casey says that 'Dhyan brings to the fore the latent powers of creativity in a person. This creativity improves and enriches his physical, mental and spiritual aspects'. John White in his renowned work 'The meeting of science and spirit' has enumerated many benefits of Dhyan— promotion of physical health, reduction of tension, anxiety and aggressiveness, it leads to self realisation and self improvement and development. He further says that the benefit of meditation are the following— feeling of tranquility, freedom, reduction of tiredness and depression, relief from pains, increase in positive traits such as sympathy and empathy for others, believe in divinity and purity of self etc. Michael Murphy and Steven Donavan, in their research work titled 'The physical and psychological effects of meditation' have mentioned that meditation/Dhyan helps to regulate and control electrical and chemical activity of the brain, the rhythm of the heart, regulates blood pressure, the skin's ability to resist infection and it regulates general metabolism.

Sankaracharya has explained that the many Vedic rituals such as sacrifices had been transformed as mental concepts for contemplation and meditation by Chandogya Upanishad because any defect in the performance of a ritual according to the Vedas, however small and inconsequential, could devaluate and derail the whole process. Further, elaborate rituals required huge preparation and expenditure. So he prescribed that meditation was far better, safer and surer means of attaining the same benefits that elaborate sacrifices offered. Contemplation and mediation are equally efficient in spiritual pursuit of the aspirant. Nevertheless, the former (contemplation) has intellect and mind as its main focus while the latter (meditation) concentrates on the mind and body to be effective. Sacrifices, as compared to them, are merely physical rituals.

As is evident, the chariot moves in the proper direction when all the horses are controlled simultaneously. So a holistic and an all-inclusive, well synchronised and homogenous approach is needed by a seeker/aspirant to attain success in his endeavour to get liberation and deliverance from the horrible torments agitating him as well as to attain emancipation and salvation for its soul from this world.

The terms contemplation, meditation, Yoga, Upasana (worship)

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and spiritualism are inter-related but subtle differences do exist between them. A simple way to understand the difference is this— (i) Yoga is akin to physical training class in a school. A teacher teaches any number of students various methods to attune the body. (ii) Meditation is the next class where mere physical exercises are upgraded to harness the mind, to train it to focus on any specific subject and stop its inherent wayward trait. In this aspect, Yoga and meditation overlap. Meditation brings all the benefits of Yoga with the bonus of spiritual elevation of the mind. Once the mind's agitations are controlled, it begins to 'think, to ponder' on matters more important for life. Since the desire for peace, bliss and tranquility, for understanding 'who I really am' is inherent in all the creatures, the next logical step is (iii) contemplation. When a man's eyes turn inwards (rather than trying to focus on an external symbol or idol as done in meditation) and he begins to examine himself, he finds that the 'true self' is hidden in his bosom, in his heart's core (Taiteriya Upanishad, 2/1). This 'self' is attained by those whose mind is clean and scrubbed of all scum represented by extrovert tendencies, and instead made sharp, subtle and concentrated (Katha Upanishad, 1/3/12). This Atma is attained by unrelenting practice of truthfulness, austerity, right knowledge and continence (Mundak Upanishad, 3/1/5).

(16) Upasana :—The worship or adoration of the 'Truth' is called Upasana. This worship can be of a chosen deity or of the pure self. This worship embraces both meditation and contemplation because the worshipper physically and consciously focuses his attention unwaveringly on his object of worship, hence it is meditation, and thinks deeply about the ways to attain his object of worship, hence contemplation. The evolution of human psychology from the humdrum and mundane to higher plane of thought and discrimination is the aim of spirituality and the reward is divinity and self realisation. Therefore, spirituality is centered and established around the theme of Atma/soul which is the pure conscious Spirit residing in the creature.

Thus we see that the discriminating intellect has a major role to play in contemplation because it helps to guide the mind to wade through a sea of knowledge, select what it needs and separate the essence from the clutter, to discriminate between what is 'the real truth' and what is only 'the apparent truth'. It eggs the mind on to reach the

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final conclusion. Thus, whereas meditation is an important tool for a contemplative life, the latter is more intuition based; it relies heavily on the laboratory of the intellect more than the mind to achieve its purpose.

Now let us have a brief glance at the obstacles in mediation and contemplation. There are four chief types— (i) physiological obstacles such as hunger, thirst, sleep etc. They can be controlled by practice and self-restraint. (ii) The inherent tendency of the mind and the body to go towards pleasing objects and to resist control. This is called the Vasanas and Vrittis of the creature. Perseverance and persistence is needed here. Gentle prodding and cajoling of the mind and disciplining of the body are needed also. (iii) Our own mistakes such as carelessness, disorganised life, overdoing or indulgences in routine matters. The best way to overcome these is moderation. A gradual disciplining is needed here. (iv) The presence of uncertainties and lack of proper guidance. Here the scriptures help.

The obstacles have been described by Patanjali in his 'Yog Sutra' as follows— (i) disease, mental laziness and lethargy, doubt, delusions and erroneous perceptions, lack of enthusiasm, attraction and attachment towards gratification of sense organs and their worldly objects, dithering and falling when the goal is almost at hand, grief, distresses of the body, irregular breathing and non-retention of concentration (Patanjali Yog Sutra, 2/31).

The 4 obstacles described by Acharya Gaupada in his celebrated Vedanta treatise called 'Mandukya Karika' are the following—(i) Laya (state of mental dullness, lack of concentration and even sleep). (ii) Vikshep (restlessness of mind, agitations). (iii) Kashaya (entering of the mind into a stupefied state). (iv) Rasavada (the joy of meditation). The 1st obstacle 'Laya' can be removed by keeping the mind active and agile by proper and regulated life. The 2nd obstacle 'Vikshepa' can be dealt with by forcibly driving away the agitation-causing thoughts from the mind. The 3rd obstacle 'Kashaya' is caused by intense attachment or even aversion to the materialistic world and its objects. The remedy here is to draw the mind away from the world and consciously cultivate noble thoughts. The 4th obstacle 'Rasavada' is a temporary feeling of joy by the seeker. He must stick to his path and not let this temporary joy to overcome his aim of permanence in joy.

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According to Yoga doctrines, there are 5 hindrances— (i) Avidya (ignorance), (ii) Asmita (ego, pride and haughtiness), (iii) Raag (attachment, infatuation), (iv) Dwesha (aversion, malice, ill-will, jealously envy) and (v) Abhinivesh (clinging to life).

(17) Mukti :—The word Mukti, put simply, means 'liberation and deliverance'. For example, when a person is in a difficult situation, he yearns freedom from his torments, and once he gets it, he says that he has got Mukti or liberation from his torments, that is, he is delivered from a hellish situation.

In spiritual realm, Mukti has different connotations for the two main schools of Hindu philosophy— the Advaitya and the Dvaitya. The Advaitya school of thought, as the name suggests, means 'non-duality' while Dvaitya means 'duality'. The Advaitya school's belief, inter alia, is that the soul of the creature is one with the supreme Soul called Brahm. This is an eternal, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent absolute entity. It is the ultimate truth and reality. Hence, Mukti in this context means the individual soul of the creature breaking free or being 'liberated' from the endless cycle of birth and death, and it getting 'delivered' from its temporary abode in the physical body of the creature. It being 'emancipated' means that its disability to break free has been overcome and it has been finally liberated, but this liberation or emancipation must logically end in the 'salvation' of the creature which means merging of the liberated soul with its primary source which is the Brahm. It is like pouring the cup of water back into the ocean. The main exponent of this philosophy was Sankaracharya.

The Dvaitya school believes in duality, i.e. that the supreme Lord (God) and the Jiva (creature) are two separate entities. For this school, there are four types of Mukti, viz (i) Salokya (to live in the abode of the God), (ii) Samipya (to live near God), (iii) Sarupya (to have a form similar to God) and (iv) Saujya (being united with the God). This latter Saujya is also called the 'Param Pad' or supreme state of being one with the Lord.

Since the Advitya school believes in only one end of the soul— its merger with the parent Soul— they emphasis 'Kaivalya Mukti' as the only form of salvation and emancipation. The word Kaivalya itself means 'only'. (Please Chapter 3, Canto 1, verse no. 15-28 and Canto 2, verse no. 75-76 of this book.)

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According to the Upanishads, there are basically two types of 'Muktis', such as 'Jivan Mukti' and 'Videha Mukti'. These have been elaborately described, inter alia, in Maho-panishad, canto 2 of Sam Veda tradition, and Muktiko-panishad, canto 2 of Shukla Yajur Veda tradition. Let us have a brief view of these two types of Muktis.

The 'Jivan Mukti' state has been described in verse nos. 40-62 above; it means freedom from being mentally engrossed in this delusionary and artificial world and becoming free from the shackles that tie a person to the cycle of transmigration in this world while he still physically lives in it and carries out his assigned and designated duties and works with dispassion and detachment.

Air is present everywhere, but it is neither visible nor felt unless it blows as a soft breeze when it is felt by its touch on the skin. So, in this case, the soul of a person who has become Videha Mukt is compared to this all-pervading but invisible wind or air which is the mainstay of life in the form of breath or Pran. Consequentially, when a person dies, the breath easily moves out of the body without any trouble. Air as breath or Pran is not a dead entity but very much alive and active like the Atma or soul of the creature. When a person is freed from his body upon death, his Atma is liberated from the boundaries that are imposed upon it by the body. The Atma sets itself free and merges with the vast cosmos which is present outside the body even as the Pran or breath present inside the body is liberated from it when it is exhaled and merges with the air present outside the body. This is tantamount to having liberation without the encumbrance imposed by the body on the Atma of the creature.

Since the true identity of the creature is not his body but the Atma, in the case of 'Videha Mukti', this Atma or soul exits from the trapping of the body much like the breath going out from inside the body and finding liberation in the outside air. Even as the air does not perish after it leaves the body, the Atma which is the true identity of the creature also does not perish once it leaves the body and is set free.

The word 'Videha 'means without a body and the word 'Mukti' means liberation and freedom, emancipation and salvation. So loosely, the phrase 'Videha Mukti' means 'freedom from the encumbrance and limitations of the body'. This 'Videha Mukti', generally speaking, is possible when the individual Atma, which is the truthful identity of

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the creature, leaves the body to merge with the cosmic Atma present outside the body of the individual creature. The example of the breath leaving the body is the best way to explain the concept. While the breath is inside the body, it represents the Atma of the individual because it is surrounded by the physical, gross body, but as soon as it is exhaled it becomes synonymous with being provided with 'Videha Mukti' because it finds freedom from the encumbrances and limitations of the body and merges with the wind present in the vast space outside the body. So if a wise creature becomes totally unaware of his body so much so that he does not even feel the pain of a pin pricking it, when he is totally oblivious of the fact that the body even exists, then in that state of existence he is equivalent to having actually lost the body altogether —that is, the creature has obtained 'Videha Mukti'. This state is usually achieved during meditation by Yogis when they enter 'Samadhi' which is a trance-like state of consciousness.

The path to emancipation and salvation according to the Dvaitya school is through the medium of various mediation techniques directed at the chosen deity, such as— (i) Japa (repetition of the holy name of a chosen God), (ii) Huta (offering of rituals and sacrifices), (iii) Archana (roughly meaning worship and service of the chosen deity), (iv) Puja (meaning adoration and worship of the chosen deity by the composite methods mentioned here) and (v) Dhyan (concentrating on the various forms, virtues, activities and glorious stories associated with the deity). For the Advaitya school, mediation involves, concentration of the mind and intellect on the non-dual supreme entity which has no form and which is universally present everywhere, residing as it is even inside the very bosom of the aspirant himself. Here, meditation uses various exercises, called Yoga, as well as different restraints and controls to help focus the mind and its faculties on the supreme Truth. That 'truth' is the Atma which is pure consciousness and an embodiment of the supreme Atma of the cosmos known as Brahm.

Now, when we talk of the Atma as pure consciousness or an embodiment of light, the question arises 'how can we obtain the clearest perception of that reality which shall enlighten our path to obtaining liberation and deliverance from the trap of delusions and ignorance?' The greatest exponent of Vedanta philosophy, sage Adi Sankaracharya prescribes the following four paths — (i) discrimination

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between the eternal and truthful, and the non-eternal and non-truthful, (ii) renunciation of desires for sensual gratification and enjoyment of pleasures from this materialistic world, (iii) development of 6 divine eclectic wealth —self control, surrender, faith, forbearance, peace/ tranquility and poise of the mind, and (iv) sincere desire for liberation and deliverance, because it is only then that the creature will try to find ways to achieve it.

Contemplation in the end, in both the cases, makes the seeker/ aspirant realise the futility of the world and kindles in him an intense desire to search out the ultimate Truth and Reality. The Upanishads here act as a referee and guide. They advise the seeker/aspirant about the goal of life. What one contemplates with intensity is what one becomes. So, if one contemplates seriously on the 'Truth', he verily becomes the truth personified, and if he contemplates on the 'False', he verily becomes false himself.

Mahabharat, Shanti Parva, describes who gets deliverance in these words:—'He who is unmoved by and treats joys and happiness as well as sorrows, miseries, troubles and misfortunes, gains as well as losses, victories as well as defeats equally, with equanimity and fortitude, whose desires, envies, ill-wills, hatreds, fears and agitations have been completely vanquished or eliminated— is the one who is truly liberated. When old age comes, the body develops wrinkles, becomes lean and decrepit, the hairs change colour to grey, the general appearance looses its sheen and attractiveness while the back tends to bend— one who constantly remains aware of these facts is truly liberated. When the time comes, manliness declines, eyesight fails, the ears do not hear and the vital forces of life becomes weak and on the verge of collapse— one who is always aware these thing is truly liberated. (Mahabrt, Shanit Parv, 288/ 37, 39-40).

The concept of Mukti is not an independent idea. It does not exist in a water tight compartment, just like no other concept of metaphysics and spiritualism exists independently of the other. Each one of them is intricately and inextricably tied to the rest of them; they run concurrently and parallel to each other. For example, liberation and deliverance from the fetters that tie a creature to this ensnaring world, i.e. achievement of Mukti depends on a horde of other concepts such as Vasanas, Vrittis, Maya, Yoga, Samadhi, the theory of Karma, the nature of Atma and

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Brahm, Vairagya and so on and so forth. So in order to get a comprehensive idea of Mukti necessarily involves other concepts. Here, let us examine this concept of 'Mukti' in detail because it would help to focus the attention on other relevant subjects as well.

There are two Upanishads that elaborately deal with this subject—one is Maho-panishad of the Sam Veda tradition, and the other is Shukla Yajur Veda tradition's 'Muktiko-panishad. Let us see what they have to say on the subject.

(1) Mahopanishad, canto 2, verse no.37-73 describes the conversation between sage Shukdeo and the enlightened king Janak, the father-in-law of Lord Ram. It defines and describes Mukti in detail as follows:—

"This knowledge is the essence of all the sciences (i.e. metaphysical and spiritual sciences) and the secret of all the mysteries of creation that exist. Hence, by knowing it, by becoming aware of it, and being enlightened about it, a person gets deliverance and emancipation very soon'. A person gets a type of liberation and deliverance from this mundane life, which is called 'Jivan Mukti' (37).

'This visible world does not exist at all' —when the mind realises this fact or firmly believes in it, then it becomes free from the allurements that the enticing stimuli originating from the material objects of this visible world present to it. When this happens, the knowledge regarding the ultimate truth is said to mature into a ripe fruit, and it is only then that the supreme peace and tranquility symbolising emancipation and salvation is achieved by the creature (38).

Abandonment of 'Vasanas' (worldly passions and inherent tendencies that create desires, yearnings, wishes, lust, attachments and allurements towards this world) is the best form of renunciation. Erudite, wise, sagacious and learned ones have called this state of renunciation of 'Vasanas' pertaining to this world being equivalent to 'Moksha' (i.e. liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackles the creature to this artificial, entrapping and mundane world) (39)

Oh the most exalted, wise and enlightened sage (Shukdeo)! Only those persons who have good, uncorrupt, untainted, righteous, pure and good 'Vasanas' which are desirable and good, those whose life has no distress, miseries, misfortune, any kind of offence or sorrow in

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it (i.e. those whose life is not unworthy, not in vain, not useless and not offensive for others, those who are not a burden on the society), and those who have the knowledge of the essence that is worthy to be known —only such types of persons are said to be fully freed or liberated from this humdrum, mundane and entrapping life (40).

The erroneous determination and fallacious belief that the material objects have an actual existence, is called 'worldly shackle'. [That is, these wrong perceptions about the world that it is true and real along with its material objects are like ties that bog down a person to this false and entrapping world.] On the other hand, the decay and ultimate perishing of the 'Vasanas' is called 'Moksha' (liberation and deliverance from the fetters that shackle the creature to this false, entrapping and artificial world. (Good Vasanas or 'Shuddha Vasanas' are those which are beneficial for the spiritual upliftment of the creature as opposed to bad Vasanas or 'Ashuddha Vasanas' which are harmful and demeaning for his spiritual upliftment. Some of the good Vasanas are a desire to help others, work for their welfare, desire to have emancipation and salvation and endeavour to accomplish it, etc.). (41).

Those who, by nature, don't like to enjoy the objects of this world and prefer to do 'Tapa' (austerity, penances and observing sacraments rigorously) are deemed to be freed or liberated from this mundane life in this world. That is, those persons who prefer to do Tapa and do not like the allurements presented to them by the material objects of this world, or those who remain aloof from the artificial world and its pleasures and comforts, and instead prefer to be renunciate and dispassionate towards this world and involve themselves in observing penances and austerities and keeping stern vows of self control and restraint —such persons are said to be freed or liberated even while they are alive in this world (42).

Those who are not affected or moved by the various joys and happiness as well as by sorrows and miseries which keep coming and going in pulsating waves every other moment, and neither do they feel miserable or anguished as well as cheerful or happy during these circumstances when they arrive, such persons are called freed or liberated from this mundane life (43).

Those who are free from, or beyond the purview and reach of such sentiments and emotions, such feelings as that of joys and exhilarations, sorrows and distress, fear and consternation, 'Kaam'

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(desires, lust, passions, yearnings) and 'Krodh' (anger), grief and regret, and other such worldly faults associated with the mind and heart, are deemed to be freed or liberated from this mundane, artificial and entrapping world (44).

Those who easily forsake 'egoistic Vasanas' and have a holistic renunciate approach towards everything pertaining to this world, they are indeed truly freed or liberated from this mundane life in this world. (Egoistic Vasanas are those that arouse ego and self pride and arrogance in a person. Such as, 'I can do this and therefore I will do it and get success and acquire fame'. Once success comes, the person thinks 'I did it and I am successful. Therefore I possess the power to do this thing, and the honour of its successful completion also belongs to me. Now, I must take the next step and do something better') (45).

Those who are contemplative and thoughtful by nature, have no materialistic desires, have no wish or hope or expectation of anything and neither do they have any worldly aspirations, and instead they have an existence, like that of a man who is in a deep sleep state of existence i.e. they are like a sleeping man who does not even dream of any event. They are the ones who have freed or liberated themselves from this humdrum, entrapping and mundane life in this world (46).

Those who are ever submerged in the Atma (which is the pure self and enlightened and illuminated pure consciousness), those whose mind is contented and fulfilled, those who are peaceful, tranquil, calm and serene, those who have no desires or yearning or wish or expectations for anything in this mortal and temporal world, those who have no attachment with anyone and roam about with total detachment and dispassion, having equanimity towards all —all such persons are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and entrapping life in this world (47).

Those whose heart does not get involved or emotionally attached to any object of this world and those who are an embodiment of righteous, noble, virtues and truthful knowledge —they are the ones who are said to be free or liberated from this mundane, artificial and entrapping life in this world (48).

Those who are equitable, even and unruffled in opposite situations such as infatuation and hatred, joys and sorrows, honour and insult, righteousness and unrighteousness as well as good or bad rewards of

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various actions and deeds, those who remain busy, without getting mentally and emotionally charged up and involved with their (selfless) work —they are the ones who are called freed or liberated from this mundane, artificial and entrapping life in this world (49).

Those who have forsaken 'Ahankar' (ego, pride, haughtiness, arrogance), those who are devoid of pride, envy, jealously, malice and ill-will towards others and continue to do their worldly duties and chores without getting agitated and making any resolves about them— they are the ones who are deemed to be free or liberated from this mundane, artificial and entrapping life in this world (50).

Those who live a life as if they were a mere witness to all that is happening without any involvement and attachment to the goings-on and continue to selflessly do their assigned and designated work and duties without any expectations or hopes of a reward —they are said to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (51).

Those who have abandoned both righteousness and unrighteousness (i.e. they remains equitable and equanimous in different circumstances), those who have abandoned all thoughts of this materialistic world and its objects, those who have abandoned all desires, hopes and expectations, yearnings and aspirations —they are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (52).

Those who have completely forsaken this world of delusions, artificiality and illusions that is visible all around —they are called freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (53).

The wise one who accepts all types of food, whether it is bitter, sour or salty, whether it is crunchy, crispy and tasty as well as bland, stale and tasteless without making any distinction between them — such a person is said to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (54).

Adversities such as old age, death, troubles and misfortunes, or with prosperity (such as being crowned a king of any place) as well as poverty and dearth of even the necessities of life —such persons are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (55).

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Those who have completely eliminated from their hearts the distinction between 'Dharma and Adharma' (i.e. what is noble and what is ignoble), the difference between 'Sukh and Dukh' (i.e. comfort and happiness as well as suffering and torments, anguish and sorrows) as well as death and birth —such persons are deemed to be liberated and delivered from the shackles that tie a person to this mundane, artificial life in this world (56).

Those persons who are devoid of all agitations including joys of all kinds (i.e. those who are neither distressed or annoyed nor delighted or happy), those who are even-keeled and unruffled even during grief and sorrows as well as during joys and happiness, those who are endowed with a clean and uncorrupt mind-intellect complex —they are the ones who are said to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (57).

Those who have fully renounced all hopes, desires, ambitions, resolutions, vows and aspiration pertaining to this world —they are the ones who are called freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (58).

Those persons whose mind remains stable, calm, serene and steady during birth, sustenance and annihilation periods or phases of life as well as during its development and progress or its downfall, degradation, degeneration and demotion —they are the ones who are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (59).

Those who do not keep any kind of malice and ill-will against anybody, those who do not expect anything from anyone, those who just pass through the sufferings or enjoyments that come their way due to destiny with equanimity and indifference, treating them both alike —they are the ones who are said to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (60).

Those who have abandoned or forsaken all desires for the objects of sensual gratification in this world, those who have made their minds defunct in this respect (i.e. those who have stopped thinking about this artificial world and its material objects of comfort and pleasure) —they are the ones who are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (61).

Those persons who remain indifferent towards the worldly

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attraction of money and wealth like it were someone else's property inspite of being surrounded by pageantry, pomp and pelf (i.e. inspite of owning them), indeed such great, righteous, virtuous, wise and enlightened persons can experience the supreme truth in the Atma/soul, and verily they are deemed to be freed or liberated from this humdrum, artificial and mundane life in this world (62).

At the time of discarding their mortal bodies upon death, they (i.e. those persons who have the characteristic features, virtues and qualities as described above in this Canto) rise above the 'Jivan Mukti state' and attain the superior state of 'being one who has freed himself from the binding fetters of the limitations imposed by this gross body', a state called 'Videha Mukti' (literally meaning liberation without the encumbrance imposed by the limitations of the gross body). They become like the wind element which does not blow (63).

In this state of 'Videha Mukti', there is neither enhancement of stature nor demotion or degradation in it of any kind, and neither does the creature perish. This state of the creature (soul) is beyond debates of truth or false, and neither it is near or far from anywhere (because it is all pervading, omnipresent and immanent just like the wind element of the creation; so this question of it being near or far, being true or false, does not arise) (64).

That state (Videha Mukti) is a neutral and inert state of existence. There is neither light nor darkness in it. It has a mysterious element of truth in it that cannot be described, and which has no name or attributes, qualifications or qualities that can define or delineate it (65).

It is neither void (e.g. vacuum of space) nor gross (e.g. a piece of lead). It is neither visible as an object nor as an invisible perception of the senses. It is akin to neither the basic elements of creation (earth, water, fire, air and space) nor their gross manifestations in the form of the diverse and myriad objects of the world (66).

That absolute Truth and Reality is simply present in an intrinsic and inherent manner in this world. [That is, it is there because the world is there. The proof of it being there is the world's existence]. It is such an astoundingly mysterious, most fascinating and astonishing element whose form, attributes, characteristics and features can't be delineated and described. Its form and nature (if these terms help to

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define it somehow or somewhat) are more complete than the absolute whole. It is neither a truth nor a falsehood; neither a half-truth nor a half-falsehood. It is beyond emotions and sentiments, beyond understating and comprehension (67).

It is simply uncorrupted and undiluted 'pure consciousness'; it is also eternal, infinite and without any mind-intellect complex (which the ordinary living creatures possess). It is free from old age, is an embodiment of 'Shiva element' (i.e. auspiciousness, truth, beauty, erudition, wisdom and eternity), and is a bestower of welfare to the Atma/soul of the creature (i.e. it provides the soul with an opportunity to get truthful and real welfare which is its emancipation and salvation). It has no beginning, no middle or center and no end. It is infinite and faultless (68).

In the 'Triad of Seers' consisting of the 'person' who sees, the 'object' (the scene which is seen), and the 'process of seeing' (the action or activity of seeing or observing), the Atma as pure consciousness is said to pertain to the last one (i.e. it is only a witness in the process of seeing, it is only a medium by which the objects of the world are seen or observed by the entity that sees them. Hence, just like the medium has no interest in either the person who is seeing or the object which is being seen, 'it' too remains neutral to both of them).

Oh sage (Shukdeo)! Nothing else can be said with certainty in connection with it (69).

You have understood this essential Truth which is the absolute Realty and an irrefutable, immutable and immaculate fact by self study or self realisation. This knowledge has come to you also by hearing about it from you father (sage Veda Vyas). This knowledge basically means that a creature gets shackled to the mundane, artificial and entrapping world due to its own inclinations and wishes, its own desires and aspirations, and it gets liberation and deliverance from it due to its own wishes and desires, its own powers, diligent efforts and sincere aspirations (70).

Hence, you have already acquired that essential and truthful knowledge, after acquisition of which the erudite, wise, saintly, pious and spiritually oriented people become dispassionate or disenchanted with all the visible objects of this perishable and temporal world along with its pleasures and comforts (71).

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You have reached that state of complete enlightenment where you are deemed to have acquired all that there is worthy to be acquired. Hence, you are established in the high stature obtained as a result of doing Tapa (observation of austerity and doing penances and keeping religious vows which makes a person capable of acquiring anything he wished because Tapa gives him immense potentials). You must abandon negative traits such as having doubts, confusions, perplexities and confoundedness from your mind because you have reached the high state of 'Mukti' (as described in aforesaid verses) (72).

Oh Shukdeo! You do not see what is outside and beyond it. You do not see what is inside and hidden in it. You are a neutral witness and are firmly established in that final and ultimate state of existence where there is no duality. (The Mukti referred to here is 'Jivan Mukti' and not 'Videha Mukti' simply because sage Shukdeo is still alive. 'Jivan Mukti' has been described in verse no. 37, which briefly means that he has become totally dispassionate and detached from all the allurements and enticements offered by the objects of gratification present in this world, he has conquered his emotions and sentiments, he is even, patient and calm as is evident from the fact that he did not become angry at kind Janak when he was made to wait at the palace gates. He also was not enchanted by beautiful women or indulged in eating delicious food inside the palace. These are the virtues in him that Janak had tested when he had made him wait for seven days at a stretch for three consecutive periods when he had come to meet the king. 'Jivan Mukti' refers to being dispassionate and equitable to this world while a person still has a body and goes about his daily routine as usual.

The state of existence referred to here is the state when the creature realises the true nature of his Atma and the falsehoods of the external world. In this state, the only thing that remains is the 'truth'. The word 'Kewal' means 'the only one'. The only one here refers to the absolute Truth and Reality of creation which is also one without a second)".(73).

(2) Now, let us see what Muktiko-panishad, canto 2, verse no.2-74, which describes the conversation between Lord Ram and Hunuman on the same subject, has to say:-

Sri Ram replied, 'Oh Hanuman! The thoughts and belief of the creature that 'it is the enjoyer-sufferer, a doer of deeds, is happy or

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sad as a result of his deeds', are all due to its mind. This erroneous knowledge or belief (that the creature is the one who suffers, who enjoys, who does) is at the root of all its troubles, miseries and torments in this world; it shackles the creature to the world. The elimination or purging of this fallacious and misleading belief and its accompanying sorrows is tantamount to 'Jivan Mukti' (i.e. being freed from the fetters that tie the creature to this illusionary and deluding world while he is still alive in it).

When the Atma of the creature cracks through the shell surrounding it, the former merges with the infinite space around it. That is, the Atma and the space which represents the fathomless Brahm become one. Such liberation of the soul is called 'Videha Mukti' (i.e. the ultimate salvation of the soul when the body housing the creature is discarded and the soul becomes free from its captivity and merges with the supreme Soul or Brahm which is its parent origin. The situation can be compared to the hatching of a chick from an egg shell). The 108 Upanishads are the authentic proof that the two types of Muktis (i.e. deliverance, liberation, emancipation and salvation)— viz, the Jivan Mukti and the Videha Mukti— do exist.

To obtain supreme bliss, tranquility, ecstasy, contentedness and happiness by eliminating all the sorrows and anguish associated with 'being a doer of deeds' and 'suffering or enjoying their consequences' is the object, aim and objective of these Muktis. It is achievable by diligent industry and sincere effort, perseverance and contemplation.

Even as a son is begot by doing a son-begetting fire sacrifice called 'Putresthi Yagya', wealth and property are generated by commerce and trade, and heavenly abode is achieved by doing the 'Jyotisthom Yagya', one can achieve Jivan Mukti etc. through the process of 'Samadhi' (i.e. a meditative state where trance-like creature becomes unaware of the surrounding world and realises the glory and illumination of the Atma shining inside him, leading to bliss and ecstasy). This 'Samadhi' is possible by inculcating the tenets of the Upanishads in daily life, practicing them rigorously and consistently with firm belief, faith and conviction. Further, it is accomplished when all the Vasanas are eliminated, purged and destroyed. [The word Vasana means—desires, allurements, yearnings, greed, passions, infatuations, attachments, inherent inclinations and temperaments

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of the creature towards this illusionary and deluding materialistic world.] (2).

A man's efforts are of two types— (a) against or opposed to the guidelines prescribed by the scriptures and (b) in consonant with or according to them. Out of these two, the former is the root cause of all misfortunes, degradation, ruin and doom; pursuing such a path is futile and waste of time and energy. On the other hand, efforts made in accordance to the scriptural guidelines prove to be a boon and give emancipation and salvation. The actual truth cannot be learnt by the creature as long as it has 'Lok Vasana' (i.e. desire for, and attraction towards, this materialistic world), 'Shastra Vasana' (i.e. desire to become expert in the scriptural books and to be recognised and honoured as such), and 'Deha Vasana' (i.e. gratification of the sense organs). That is, these three Vasanas are the obstacles in gaining truthful knowledge about the absolute and irrefutable Reality.

The Vasanas are again classified into two types— good and bad (or auspicious and inauspicious; uncorrupt and corrupt). Oh Hanuman! If you pursue truthful knowledge by the medium or path of good Vasanas, you will get a noble and exalted stature which is equivalent to me. On the contrary, if you fallow bad/inauspicious/corrupt Vasanas, then you will land in great trouble. Oh Lord of the monkeys! You must diligently endeavour to conquer/vanquish accumulated results of past deeds done by you. You should divert the surging river flowing though the various paths of bad/corrupt Vasanas into a channel passing through good/uncorrupt Vasanas. That is, let your thought processes go through good thoughts instead of allowing them to go wayward towards evil and sinful thoughts.

The flow of Vasanas (i.e. inherent tendencies and natural inclinations of the mind of the creature) though the path of evil and bad should be industriously diverted towards a good path/channel because it is a tendency of the mind that it cannot rest and is always in a state of flux. As a consequence, when it is stopped from going towards evil and bad, it will automatically overflow into that channel which is good, and this is true for the opposite situation also. A man should try to tame the mischievous child-like mind most lovingly and courteously, and coax it and allure it into doing what is good, righteous and virtuous.

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When both types of your Vasanas begin to disintegrate and gradually vanish, then oh the vanquisher of enemies, you should become assured that your efforts are bearing fruits (3-8).

Be consciously focusing your attention towards good, auspicious, righteous, uncorrupt and noble Vasanas (and keep away from the opposite type of Vasanas). If such good Vasanas are enhanced, they never produce bad results. [That is, if the choice is between good and bad Vasanas, the seeker should opt for the former, but when there is no choice, it is better to divert the mind forcefully towards things which are considered noble and good instead of letting the mind lying idle or allowing it to rest on bad thoughts because the mind can never rest in peace and will automatically, imperceptibly go towards unrighteous Vasanas as they are more pleasing for the gross body of the creature and gratifies its sense organs.]

Oh wise Hanuman! The three— (i) disintegration/purging of Vasanas, (ii) acquisition of truthful knowledge about the absolute reality and (iii) conquering of the mind—produce their good results over a long period of time. Unless these three are practiced simultaneously, one cannot achieve 'Kaivalya pad' (i.e. become one with the supreme Lord; emancipation and final salvation of the soul) even in hundreds of years. If they are practiced separately or in an ad-hoc basis, they do not produce the desired results even as the various Mantras prove useless if not repeated in a proper way. [For example, the letters of the alphabet should be arranged and used in a proper sequence to form a meaningful word, phrase or sentence; otherwise, a fractured structure of the sequence of the same letters will make no sense at all.] If those three (see above) are practiced simultaneously over a long period of time with diligence and patience, the strong knots of the heart are easily untied (or dismantled) just like the strands of a lotus flower fall apart when its stem is split/broken into two.

The worldly desires which are being pursued over hundred of lives cannot be so easily purged and overcome without doing diligent practice as well as making sincere and industrious effort for a long period of time. Hence, oh dear Hanuman, bow before (i.e. say good-by to) the desire for gratification of the sense organs from a distance, and instead of it, you should follow the above three paths as described most diligently and intelligently (9-15).

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Erudite ones have called the mind-intellect complex which is full of Vasanas as being tied or shackled, while that which is without it is defined as being free or liberated. Oh great Kapi (i.e. Hanuman)! Bring the mind-intellect complex in the latter category soon. Vasanas are destroyed by proper thought, contemplation and practicing the truth. When the Vasanas are exhausted, the 'Chitta' (i.e. mind-intellect complex) also vanishes like the light of the lamp goes out when its oil is exhausted. He who concentrates unwaveringly on the pure conscious form of me, gets the supreme blissful state of existence and he becomes one with me— whether he does various religious rituals or not. He, in whose heart there is no Vasana, is the one who has been really and truthfully freed; he is really and truthfully exalted (16-19).

Those people who have removed the Vasanas of their mind are not bothered about either doing any deed or not doing it. They do not need to do 'Japa' (repetition of the divine Mantras) as well.

There is no other stature called 'the supreme state' except the abandonment/elimination of all the Vasanas and become silent (i.e. a state when all the agitations of the mind, intellect and the heart cease). Though their might be no apparent Vasanas seen overtly, but the tendency of the various sense organs such as eyes to be attracted towards their respective objects are also a form of suppressed or subtle, unapparent and covert Vasana. [That is, the tendency of the eye to look at pleasant scenes is also a form of desire or yearning to satisfy the need to look at pleasant views vis-ë-vis unpleasant views.]

Even as the eyes glance at visible things that come its way at random without actually getting engrossed in or enchanted by them, literally 'seeing' them, a patient and fortitudinous seeker carries on with his work in this world without getting involved in it. [That is, the seeker does not get attached with the deeds done by him at the sentimental level; he does all the deeds dispassionately and without bothering about the results, whether they are good or bad, compatible or unfavourable.]

On the son of the wind-God! The imaginary but majestic realms which are generated by the mind-intellect complex of the creature and are favourable to it (i.e. the mind-intellect apparatus finds them alluring; it wishes to delve on those subjects for a long time; they are sufficiently enticing for the mind as well as the intellect to constantly

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and repeatedly divert their attention towards them) — the erudite sage call these tendencies of the mind-intellect to repeatedly dwell on enticing objects as 'Vasana'. The state of flux or the agitation created in the mind-intellect due to persistent thought of those enticing/ pleasing objects, the reality of which are already well known and normally do not qualify for any special attention — they are the cause of birth, old age and death. The Vasanas rock the tranquil boat of the mind-intellect, and this constant shaking and stirring of the otherwise calm, serene and peaceful matter cause further agitations in the mind. In this way, new Vasanas sprout from the seed of the mind-intellect complex. This chain reaction continues (20-26).

The tree of 'Chitta' (i.e. mind-intellect complex of the creature which is also called its subtle body) has two seeds— (i) Pran (the vibrations of life; the rhythm and essential functions pertaining to life) and (ii) Vasanas (the compulsive forces that drive the creature towards the objects of this materialistic world at the cost of his mental peace). Out of these, if one decays (or removed), the other follows suit.

There are three ways by which the birth of new Vasanas can be stopped—viz (i) to do deeds without getting involved in them or to do them with dispassion, (ii) to stop thinking unduly about this world, and (iii) to be constantly aware of the perishable nature of this body. And once the Vasanas are annihilated, the mind-intellect complex becomes defunct or inert, i.e. it loses its capacity to generate new Vasanas; it becomes inane.

When the Vasanas are destroyed or purged, the agitations of the mind automatically subside, and this results in the intellect taking over charge of the complex. Since intellect is empowered with the power to discriminate between what is good and what is bad, the creature is said to have 'wisdom', and with the calming-down of the agitated mind, the creature achieves peace, tranquility, bliss and happiness.

Till the time Gyan (truthful knowledge about the reality) does not light up your inner-self, you should follow the lighted path shown by a wise teacher or by the scriptures. [That is, in the absence of the light generated by enlightenment and self-realisation, you need some help in your spiritual progress; otherwise you will be groping in the dark

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and might go astray.] Gradually, when you become well-versed in the truth about the absolute, supreme and irrefutable Reality, you should abandon good Vasanas too. (27-31).

The annihilation of 'Chitta' (i.e. the faculty of reasoning and concentration; the mind-intellect complex; thought, understanding, attention etc.) is of two types— (i) one with attributes or forms, and (ii) the other without attributes or forms. In other words, the seekers who are called 'Jivan Mukta'—i.e. those who have freed themselves from the shackles of this delusionary world while still alive and living in it, are able to annihilate their 'Chitta' while going about their worldly affairs by being dispassionate and detached towards everything, while those who are 'Videha Mukta' — i.e. have shed their mortal coil (the gross body) and are able to purge the mind-intellect complex for good because they do not have any unfulfilled desires left at the time of death, and therefore have no reason to re-enter the cycle of birth and death.

Annihilation/control/purging of the mind:—Oh son of the wind-God! Now listen attentively about the purging and annihilation of the mind. When its tendency to search, investigate, enquire and debate unnecessarily is calmed-down or subsides, then such virtues as friendliness, mercy, compassion, happiness, detachment and dispassion shall heave in the creature's bosom. The creature will find supreme bliss on the subsidence or annihilation of the Vasanas which are synonymous with agitations of the mind. Agitations never give peace. There is no doubt about it.

Hence, the mind is the root of this vast, colossus world-like tree with thick bark and huge branches, well laden with fruits, flowers and leaves.

The mind is full of 'Sankalp' (i.e. numerous resolutions, determinations, vows and promises, hopes and aspirations). Hence, get rid of these so that the tree-like world loses its charm and gradually dries up. The only way to obstruct the mind's agitations and calm it down is to determine that allowing it to go unleashed will lead to its downfall, will be detrimental to its own good and interest, while controlling it, putting it under leash, will be for its good and welfare.

Gyan helps to control the mind. An ignorant person's mind is like a shackling chain for him. Gyan is like a leash while ignorance is like a shackle (32-39).

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The free-run of Vasanas in the heart of the seeker are like the ghosts and phantoms of night. They can be controlled only by conquering the mind by realising the truth of one factor— that is, the entire world is false, the Atma is pure and the only conscious factor, it is blissful and eternal, and it is synonymous with the supreme Brahm.

Those whose mind-intellect complex with its pride, ego and haughtiness have been decimated and the enemy-like sense organs have been vanquished (i.e. controlled), their desire for gratification of the sense organs and infatuations with the world are also completely annihilated just like the lotus flower that withers away itself at the approach of snowfall in winter.

The first task is to exercise control over one's mind-intellect complex by industrious efforts— making an all-out effort to control it by wringing hands, grinding teeth and pressing the body, as it were.

There is no other way to conquer the mind other than sitting-down to contemplate with a focused intellect and concentrating upon the pure-self (40-43).

Even as a wild and intoxicated elephant cannot be brought under control without a goad, the potent and powerful instruments/ implements to control the ever agitated mind-intellect are the following— (i) The acquisition of spiritual knowledge, (ii) company of good people, (iii) total forsaking of Vasanas and (iv) the practice of 'Pranayam' (i.e. Yoga exercises in which the vital wind forces of the body— especially breathing process— are controlled). Those people who try to forcible mollify and control the wild and reckless mind-intellect complex by other means are groping in the dark without the light of a lamp, and are trying to tie the elephant with the help of the stem of a lotus flower.

The 'Virttis' (i.e. habits, natural temperaments, inherent tendencies and inclinations) are like creepers and they rely on the tree of the mind-intellect for support and sustenance. This tree has two types of seeds— (i) The vibrations of the wind forces of life (Praan) and (ii) firm resolves and beliefs. The former activates the life that is present in each individual creature. The latter— when properly directed and focused— results in awareness and acquisition of knowledge about the absolute truth and the realty without faltering or stumbling at every distraction and obstacle coming in the path of the seeker/

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aspirant. This results in liberation and deliverance. Therefore, amongst the means to put a leash on and harness the potential of the mind-intellect complex, the process of 'Dhyan' (i.e. meditation, contemplation, focus of attention on the pure-self and concentration on the truth and absolute realty) as enshrined in and enunciated by the Upanishads has been prescribed as a chief mean or way to do so.

Even if your mind-intellect apparatus is not purged of all faults and impurities (e.g. impure thoughts, corrupt tendencies, worldly desires and passions are not fully expunged), you should still try to contemplate upon the supreme Brahm who is an embodiment of eternal, infinite, absolute and supreme bliss and happiness. This state leads to glory and majesty whereas diversion from this path produces infamy and ruin.

The natural habit of the mind is to remain in a state of flux and take the easy path downhill towards worldly enjoyments and gratification of the sense organs (because spiritual efforts are an uphill task requiring diligence and industry). So, you must constantly try to wean the mind away from going astray down hill, and instead pull it up to focus on the supreme Brahm (44-50).

Till the time the 'Apan Vayu' (the wind passing downwards through the anus; the word also refers to self-praise and pride) is not controlled, the 'Pran Vayu' (the wind force that lifts the soul up, the vital force that drives the mind and intellect as well as the heart of the creature; also meaning the wind filling the lungs and driving up the respiratory tract) cannot rise, and the state called 'Kumbhak' persists. This state is experienced by Yogis (ascetics). On the contrary, when the Pran Vayu is stopped and till the Apan Vayu does not emerge, the stage is called 'Bahaye Kumbhak'.

Samadhi :—When 'Ahankar' (ego, false pride, haughtiness, arrogance, vanity) is destroyed as a result of prolonged practice of 'Dhyan' (concentration and meditation on the absolute truth, the pure nature of the self, treating the Atma as an image of the supreme Brahm and becoming aware of its supreme conscious form), and the natural, inherent tendencies of the seeker become infused with the glorious and powerful current emanating from the supreme Brahm, then the state thus obtained is called 'Sampragyat Samadhi' (a trance-like state obtained as a result of awareness of the truth and acquisition of correct

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knowledge which enables the seeker/aspirant to lose awareness of the outside world). In other words, when all agitations of the mind cease, the seeker gets into a trance-like state called Samadhi which gives supreme bliss, tranquility, peace and happiness to him. This state is very dear to Yogis. In this state, nothing of the outside physical world is felt and experienced because the mind and intellect cease to exist, all tendencies become extinct, all agitations subside, and instead only the pure consciousness survives. During this period, the intellect is freed from all encumbrances and stays in proximity of the pure consciousness called the 'Chidatma' (or the eternal, enlightened soul or Atma). It is in direct contact with and under guidance of it. The supreme, complete and absolute Brahm, who is Truth personified, is experienced everywhere during this period. This stage of Samadhi is equivalent to emancipation and salvation while still living in this world (because it gives the same bliss and happiness which the creature obtains on the final merger of his soul with the supreme Brahm after death). It has been enunciated by Brahma (the creator) himself. It is, therefore, equivalent to 'Kaivalya Samadhi' or the ultimate bliss which is obtained when the creature realises the only and absolute Truth about his Atma and the supreme Brahm being one and the same (51-56).

Further definition of Vasana:—The tendency of the mind-intellect to firmly accept apparent outwardly appearances of any object instead of determining its true and real nature is called the fault of the 'Chitta' and is also called 'Vasana'. Oh the best amongst the monkeys! The mind-intellect complex comes between the Atma and the gross body of the creature consisting of the sense organs. In other words, the Atma receives the inputs of the outside world through the medium of the organs of perception; these inputs are then monitored by the mind-intellect complex; the results are passed on to the organs of actions in the gross body of the creature. The Atma has minimal role to play in this setup. However, when the mind-intellect, which is saturated with Vasanas (like water in sponge), interferes with the input, the results of the output are also influenced by the Vasanas. When the Vasanas are completely exhausted, the inputs are under direct control of the intellect, which in turn is in direct control, contact and command of the Atma/soul of the creature. Hence, in such a situation, the Atma is able to direct the actions through the medium of the intellect and

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control the actions of the creature. Since the Atma is pure, the instruction that it issues are also pure and it leads to righteous actions of the creature. The former type of perception of the Atma is called 'Moha' (delusions; here the word means biased, distorted and untrue view of the world). The situation is akin to an intoxicated man— though he sees everything around him but his views and perceptions become distorted and out of context (57-60).

Again, Vasana is of two types— (i) uncorrupt and pure, (ii) corrupt and impure. The latter throws the creature into the whirlpool of birth and death while the former liberates it from it. Wise people say that the impure/corrupt/darkened Vasanas are embodiments of 'Ahankar' (pride, ego, haughtiness, arrogance etc.) as well as 'Agyan' (a treasury of ignorance and delusions) [please also see verse no. 3-10 above.].

Just like a seed is unable to generate into a new plant after being roasted, the purging and destruction of Vasanas relevant to this world also prevent re-birth of the creature. Hence, one should be like a roasted seed. Oh the son of the wind-God (Hanuman)! What is the benefit of fruitless and endless debates over the scriptures— they are like crushed nuts or gram seeds. The same effort should be diverted towards searching for the inner light of enlightenment, a light which is eternal and provides a solution to the darkness caused by ignorance.

Oh the lion amongst monkeys (i.e. the chief amongst monkeys! Those who are unconcerned about their fame, and instead, concentrate on their inner-self and remain silently engrossed in it— they are not only experts in the supreme knowledge of the Brahm but are also deemed to be equivalent to Brahm himself (61-64).

Even after studying the four Vedas and numerous 'Shastras' (scriptures), those who do not know the essence of the supreme Brahm are prevented from enjoying supreme bliss, contentedness, tranquility and happiness just like the ladle does not know the taste of food inspite of it being present in the latter. Those who do not get detachment and repugnance even after smelling the stinking smell of their bodies (e.g. the foul odour coming out from a dead body), say, what other knowledge or teaching can be given to them so as to create a sense of repugnance and detachment from their gross and perishable bodies. The body is full of filth while the Atma is very pure (65-67).

Those who are tied to various Vasanas (i.e. desires, yearnings,

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inclinations and attachments) are shackled while the destruction of Vasanas is called liberation and deliverance, emancipation and salvation. Hence, even the desire to get liberation and deliverance as well as emancipation and salvation should also be abandoned because it is also a form of Vasana.

To start with, first abandon the Vasanas generated in the mind (such as the very tendency of the mind to seek or desire anything), then those pertaining to the physical body (such as gratification of the sense organs). After that, you must abandon even the Vasanas for emancipation and salvation. This will give immense peace and tranquility to you. You should be compassionate and loving towards all, and at the same time, concentrate your mind towards your pure and conscious form which is your true identity.

Oh Maruti! At the end, you must forsake from your mind even this desire to concentrate on your pure-self and, consequentially, become established in my supreme and divine form (i.e. become one with me, or merge with me) (68-71).

Oh the son of the wind-God! You must worship my form which is indescribable and is beyond the reach of words and comprehension. It cannot be touched or felt, is formless and attributeless, is bland and without any smell/odour, is never corrupted and tarnished in anyway, is without any name or clan or caste or creed, and which is the eliminator of all the sorrows, miseries, troubles, tribulations and torments of the creature.

Oh Hanuman! He who is the witness to all, is fathomless and measureless like the sky, the knowledge of whom leaves nothing more to be learnt, who is without a birth, is one and unique, is unattached and has no encumbrances, is all-pervading and all-encompassing, is the best and the most exalted entity, is the personification of the three syllables of the divine word OM (i.e. A, U, M), who is free from all forms of fractionalization (i.e. he cannot be partitioned, fractured or structured into separate segments), is non-dual, is the essential nature of things, is the embodiment of the primordial sound 'OM', and is the imperishable and eternal Brahm— that is me! I am the witness/observer, am pure and uncorrupt, never become tainted or subject to any faults (i.e. I am without blemishes and without reproach), and there is nothing other than me which can become the object for my

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attention. I am complete in myself, above and below, inside and outside. You must contemplate on this form of mine (72-74).

(18) Maya :—Maya is a word which has two parts, Ma + Ya. The first half has a negative connotation. 'Ma' means 'to measure, mark off, by any standard; to show, to exhibit, to display; to infer, to conclude; to be formed, built, made of', while the second part 'Ya' means 'this or that'. 'Ma' has a negative connotation. Therefore, the composite word Maya means neither this nor that; anything that is not real; that which is delusionary, illusionary, deceptive, mirage like and deceitful, and is caused by the ignorance about its truth and reality; something that has no substance or pith; displays no certainty and leads to wrong inference. The term Maya is used to define all these phenomenon. Hence, Maya is a synonym used for all that is deceptive, faulty, false, deluding, ignorance based, illusionary, impostering, deceitful, invisible and para-natural; all that which has no reality or substance; all that is hollow. It creates hallucinations in a creature's mind leading him to believe that what he sees is the truth.

Maya has three basic constituent qualities. Hence it is called 'Trigunmayi', i.e. one which has the three Gunas or qualities. These three Gunas or qualities are— Sat, Raj and Tam. 'Sat' is the most auspicious, virtuous and noblest quality in a man and raises him to a high moral and spiritual pedestal. It marks predominance of righteousness and the highest standards of spirituals and mental evolvement leading to high thoughts, noble actions and righteous behaviour. 'Raj' is the medium quality in a person, and it is marked by worldly passions, desires, yearnings and greed. It makes a man more worldly than spiritual. 'Tam' is the third and most lowly of the three qualities and is used has a synonym for darkness and evil. Obviously, 'Tam' means ignorance, delusions and all the forces or qualities that are evil, mean, lowly, miserly, wicked and base. They pull down a man from high pedestal and virtually dump him in the dust yard of creation to rust and decay.

These three qualities together, in various permutations and combinations, decide the innate nature of a man. The greater presence of 'Sat' makes a man nobler as compared to a high ratio of 'Tam' which makes him wicked, pervert and evil. Various proportions of these qualities will therefore produce innumerable varieties of creatures

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having different temperaments, thought processes, behaviours, demeanours and mental setup in this world.]

(19) Concept of Naad and OM :—The eclectic, esoteric and ethereal word 'Naad' literally means 'a song, a noise, music, a cry'. The creation came into being with five basic elements as its building blocks—sound, wind, fire, water and earth. Of these, sound was the most subtle and sublime, and therefore it was the nearest analogue to the entity that initiated the process of creation in the first place. It was given the name 'Pranav' which was deemed to be synonymous with 'Brahm', and it represented the cosmic conscious factor or energy field which was also known as the Soul of the cosmos. Hence, the first revelation of the cosmic consciousness was 'sound', and this sound was called 'Naad'. It had the energy of sound incorporated in its vibrations.

Out of the five basic elements, the sound is the only one which first appeared and was a manifestation of life. The rest subsequently appeared and became gross by increasing order of grossness. Since sound travels in waves, it produced a rhythmic, wave-like movement in ether and it was called the 'wind' which helped to propagate the sound. The waves of sound either collided with each other or rode one on the top of the other to produce a wide spectrum of sound, some of high and some of low frequencies. Hence, 'Naad' is perceived in various ways depending upon the caliber of the sensory receptor organs and the mental development of the seeker. 'Naad' covered all frequencies of sound —ultra high, very high, low and very low etc. As a result, some sound was audible and some not just like we can hear someone speaking but cannot here the electromagnetic radio waves which surround us everywhere.

This 'Naad' can be physically perceived in various modes— (i) as the resonating sound of a gong hit by a hammer, (ii) as a distant roar of the ocean, (iii) the rustling sound of a rattle snake, (iv) as the trundling sound of a train, and (v) as the playing of various musical instruments, either separately or in conjunction with each other. In some cases it is simply a consistent and persistent roar of an ocean, in others that sound is a resonance like that of a tinkling anklet or different musical notes of various nodes and tunes.

The 'Naad Bindu Upanishad' (Chapter no. 3) describes the hearing of a distant roar by closing the ears with fingers, and it goes on to say

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that an ascetic seeker (Yogi) can, with practice, fine-tune his sensory perceptions to filter this vague sound and decipher the different wavelengths or frequencies of that somber and composite sound to hear the 'divine music being played with umpteen number of musical instruments playing simultaneously in harmony with each other'.

To understand the importance of 'Naad', let us look at our own-selves. A man is said to be alive as long as he 'breathes', i.e. the vital wind called Pran passes through his body, specially the nostrils. This Pran not only keeps the body 'alive', its manifestation is done by two distinct signs— the beating of the heart and, most important, the passage of wind through the throat/the wind pipe. And this passage produces 'speech' by vibrating against the vocal cords which act like musical instruments. So, metaphorically the Pran 'speaks', the Pran 'vibrates and pulsates' with life in the form of heart beat. The 'sign of life' or vitality in the Pran or the vital wind is the ability and power to produce 'sound', and therefore, at the micro-level of the individual, the faculty of speech is a metaphor of the 'cosmic Naad' which is the faculty of speech of the supreme, transcendental 'Pran' at the macro-level.

The sound waves need a medium to travel. The 'Naad' that pervades the cosmos too needs a medium to travel —and this medium is called 'ether'. It is expressed as 'a gigantic ocean of sound waves'. This 'Naad' or cosmic sound produce vibrations in this ether and therefore it was the first source of 'vibratory energy'. The vibrations themselves produce the 2nd element called the 'wind' while the energy lying latent in these vibrations produces the 'light', the grosser form of which was the third element 'fire'.

As noted above, the vocal cords of our body are like a musical instrument —they play the 'Naad' represented by the Pran or the vital wind passing through these cords and producing what we call 'speech'. The various modes of these vibrations produce 'voice' in its various modes and with its different pitches, tones and tenors.

The 'Naad', therefore, is the connecting link between Brahm and the Pran of the creature. All the myriad powers of creation have there origin in and work through this 'Naad'. The 'Naad' is called 'a flaming sound' in Buddhism, 'a Kalma' in Islam, 'the word' according to Bible (Gospel, St. John, 1/1), 'as Udgit' which mean 'the song of the beyond'

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by the Upanishad (e.g. Chandogya Upanishad). Brihadarankya Upanishad, 1/2/4 asserts that cosmic creation began with sound.

We can reach the formless from the formed, riding piggy back on the waves of the sound emanating from the vital wind force of the body called Pran and reach the cosmic form of it called the 'Naad'. This 'Naad' is the door-step to Brahm because it is the 1st and the subtlest element which was produced at the time of creation. But unfortunately, this wonderful and fascinating sound cannot normally be heard by us because we are so overwhelmed by the din of worldly sounds surrounding us from all sides. We remain so engrossed and submerged in the physical world that we don't hear the 'Naad' which is in the realm of the subtle. Once we train ourselves to hear it, we plunge ourselves in the void of inner space present within ourselves. That is why the Hindi word for nerves is 'Naadi' —the duct through which the divine cosmic 'Naad' flows inside the body. When the divine and sublime cosmic sound waves are integrated with the nerves present in the body, the natural electromagnetic pull of the cosmos exerts an upward thrust on our vital wind forces trapped inside these nerves and the body, and as a consequence they tend to rise up. This is precisely what is achieved by the practice of various Yoga postures and what is meant by activating the 'Chakras' or the subtle energy centers in the body. Their trapped energy is unleashed and harnessed by the body for upliftment of the he Atma or the soul of the creature towards its primary source which is the 'Naad' or the Brahm respectively.

The cosmic 'Naad' is also called 'Anahat' or a 'soundless sound'. That is, it has a frequency which our ordinary ears can't hear even as we don't hear the broadcast of a radio station or a mobile chatter on a mobile phone unless we have the properly tuned radio or a compatible mobile instrument to capture and decipher those frequencies of the sound wave which are present all around us but cannot be heard without these instruments.

The cosmic 'Naad' is like music played by Brahm. This music is an extension of the supreme consciousness and it is a manifestation of that divine conscious factor. Since sound is the subtlest of the 5 basic elements of creation and is the nearest to divinity, the cosmic music consisting of the 'Naad' is the nearest analogue to Brahm. By being

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able to hear that 'Naad' in one's own ears and by being able to realise that the 'Naad' is originating as a subtle vibration from his own heart and getting enhanced by the compatible electromagnetic waves generated by his own brain, the Yogi is able to establish a direct link with himself and the supreme Brahm. By a natural corollary, he is able to establish oneness of his own consciousness with the cosmic consciousness because the science of music, or the science which is recognised and defined as music, transcends limitations imposed by the gross body, the physical world and its language. This 'Naad' or the divine music played by the cosmic consciousness is therefore an expression of the Reality that exists beyond doubt but is so subtle and sublime that it requires a finely tuned mind with proper training and acumen to catch its frequencies and give meaning to it.

The various fine tunes and notes of varying hues that are heard by the Yogi (ascetic) during meditation only go to prove that he is no more a layman or an ordinary student of spiritualism, but an erudite, discerning and learned student of advanced metaphysics. He has acquired that mystical power, acumen and knowledge which an expert musician possesses that enables him to discern and distinguish between the different forms of musical sounds emanating from various musical instruments.

It signifies the harmony between the vibrations emanating from the heart as well as the electromagnetic waves from the brain of the creature (the Yogi) with those emanating from the cosmic world, or the cosmic waves pervading the entire cosmos in the form of the word OM. We all know that sound consists of waves. Just like one catches one particular radio station with proper and correct frequency on his radio, so do the seeker or aspirant reaches his next destination riding piggy back on these vibration and waves emanating from his heart and brain respectively, and subsequently he lands at a spot, or takes birth in the form which matches these vibrations or waves very much like the voice of the speaker at the microphone at the broadcasting centre of the radio station reaches his audience riding upon the sound and electromagnetic waves emanating from the transmitter and being received by the radio receiver.

This explains how and why certain Yogis have that transcendental mystical power to leave their bodies and wonder around in the

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microscopic spirit form wherever they wish to go and then come back to rejoin their bodies. This also explains how and why a devotee of a particular deity (God) reaches the chosen deity's abode at the time of death to the exclusion of the abode of all other deities. It also explains the phenomenon of rebirth.

OM is a word of solemn affirmation and respectful assent, often used to denote 'yes, verily, so be it' —and therefore, in this sense having the same usage as 'Amen'. It is placed at the beginning and at the end of most sacred texts as an exclamatory invocation to invite the blessings of the supreme God. It is used as a mark of respect and auspicious salutation. It appears as a mystic monosyllable and is an object of profound religious meditation and contemplation, being the source of highest spiritual elevation. It embodies the triad of creation represented the Trinity Gods— Brahm for creation, Vishnu for sustenance and Shiva for conclusion. These three are viewed compositely as one single entity known as Brahm. the 3 letters of OM— A, U, M —stand for these three Trinity Gods respectively, while the combined sound of OM stands for Brahm.

OM is usually also called 'Pranav'. It is also used to mean 'Arambha' (beginning), 'Swikaar' (acceptance, assent), 'Anumati' (consent, permission), 'Aswikaar' (refusal, denial), 'Mangal' (auspiciousness), 'Gyan' (knowledge, enlightenment), 'Brahmi' (awareness of Brahm) etc.

The word 'Pranav' means 'a roar, a bellow, a reverberating sound, a hum or a droning sound, to utter the word OM'. It also refers to the musical instrument called Tabor, or a small drum, and the sound emanating from it.

The concept of Naad has been exclusively and elaborately dealt with in Naad Bindu Upanishad of Rig Veda tradition. It has been included as chapter 3 of this author's anthology on Rig Veda Upanishads. What our ancient sages heard as the 'cosmic sound' was not a figment of their imaginative and hallucinating fantasy-filled mind. Modern science as also established that our planet earth is 'not silent', but is 'humming' with a mysterious tune. Lately two discoveries have been made in this context. In the first, seismologists have detected a subtle and mysterious global humming known as 'love waves'. This new found vibration is made of 2-minute to 5-minute,

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side to side surface seismic waves. A mathematical model of such waves was made in 1911 by British mathematician Augustus Edward Hough Love; hence, these waves are named after him. It is essentially a wave made that torques the earth's north and south hemispheres against each other. It is as if the earth is dancing the 'twist'. This subtle, gentle, almost imperceptible twist is scientifically called the 'Toroidal mode'. Amongst the possible causes are the winds, ocean waves or even the Sun. This comes almost 10 years after seismologists identified louder global oscillations that resemble the ringing of a gigantic bell. This oscillation is known as 'earth's roaring Spheroidal Ring', which is far more powerful oscillation that warps the shape of the planet like waves on a water surface.

And that's not enough. Recent data recordings from the European Space Agency's 'cluster mission', consisting of a group of 4 high flying satellites, reveals that there is an ear-shattering series of chirps and whistles which the earth emits and which could be heard high above the planet. It has been known since 1970s and is created by the collision of charged particles of the solar wind with the earth's magnetic field. It is related to the phenomena called the 'northern lights'. They are not heard on earth because these radio waves of sound are blocked by the ionosphere surrounding the earth. They are 10,000 times stronger than the strongest of military signals on earth.

Relationship between Naad and OM:—The cosmic sound called 'Naad' was represented by the word OM and its equivalent geometrical symbol . Hence, is the monogram of that Naad, and the word OM is the 'Mantra' or word form of it.

The 7 fundamental nodes of Indian classical music— Sa, Re, Ga, Ma, Pa, Dhi, Na— are said to have originated from the basic vibratory modes of the sublime sound of OM in Nature. The Vedic quote— 'Ekoham Bahusyaami'— implies that all the sounds, all the energies, all movements and actions and everything else existing in the universe has originated in the vibrations of the cosmic 'Naad'.

The cosmic 'Naad' was meaningless and unexplainable until the time ancient sages envisioned the word OM to encapsulate the whole gamut of sound—from its beginning in silence till its end in silence. Therefore, OM represented 'Naad' as well, because the latter was a sound, albeit as music or vibration, originating against the background

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of nothing or silence in the void of the cosmos and will ultimately end in nothing or silence of the cosmos.

Ancient civilisations of the world had different words for this OM— e.g. Tibetans called it 'Hum', Muslims called it 'Amin', the Romans, the Greeks, the Hebrews and the Christians called it 'Amen'. The word Amen means, 'faithful, sure'. The syllables and sound of OM are representative of the cosmic 'Naad'. All speech and thought are derived from the one self-existent sound called OM.

While OM has a 'more philosophical dimension and meaning', the 'Naad', which even an uneducated Yogi can hear on practice, is more like 'a music' which even an uneducated person can hear and enjoy. Whereas erudition, genius and scholarship is required to understand the divine 'word' manifested and known as the Vedas (which were originally spoken words), the 'Naad' needed a fine tuned body to be heard. While the 'word' gives wisdom, the 'Naad' gives bliss to the aspirant/seeker even as knowledge gives enlightenment and the music soothes ruffled nerves. 'Naad' is the musical sound generated by the cosmic vibration emanating from Brahm that resulted in the manifestation of Nature and the subsequent creation. It is like the 'vibration of cosmic motor or generator at work'.

Swami Yoganand noted that 'everything in the universe is composed of energy. The only apparent difference between solids, liquids, gases, sound and light is merely a difference in their vibratory rates. By chanting of the word OM representing the cosmic 'Naad', the divine vibration, we can increase the body's supply of cosmic energy'.

Thorough research works[1] have proved the healing powers of 'OM chanting and meditating' on its symbol or syllables. It is said that 12,000 chanting of OM removes all sins (i.e. purifies or cleanses the inner-self and mind) while 12,000 recitations daily for a period of one year can bring realisation of the absolute truth or Brahm. [[1] (i) Indian journal of physiology and pharmacology, 39 (4), pages 418-420; and 42, pages 57-63. (ii) International journal of neuroscience, 76, no. 1-2, page 87-93.]

According to Yoga theory of 'OM', the first syllable 'A' starts in our chest at the heart (Anahat Chakra), it moves upwards with the sound 'O' or 'U' in the throat (Vishudha Chakra) and ends with the

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sound 'M' in the head (the Agna and Sahastraar Chakra). Thus, chanting and meditating on OM represents the upwards movement of the energy of the Pran (vital wind sustaining life in a creature) along the spine in conjunction with the other wind forces being pushed up through the spine by the activated 'Kundalini' lying at the base of it.

There are many meanings behind the Vedic sacred syllables collectively called OM. It is a symbolic representative of the cosmic energy field. George Feuerstein says in his book 'the Yoga tradition' that OM is held to be or to express the pulse of the cosmos itself. It is the universal sound, eternally resounding in the universe, which was deemed to be the very origin of the cosmos, the created world'. The symbol is the geometrical equivalent of its three constituent syllables—A, U, M.

According to Vedanta practitioners, the letter 'A' symbolises the waking state of consciousness, the letter 'U' represents the dream state and the letter 'M' the deep-sleep state of consciousness. The entire word OM comprising of these three letters symbolises the realisation of the cosmic divinity within oneself, within the individual creature himself. This is in perfect sync with the Upanishadic philosophy that 'the supreme Brahm resides in the individual; they are one and the same, non-dual and synonymous with each other'. Even the Bible says, 'For all the promises of God in him are yea, and in him amen, unto the glory of God by us' (2 Corinthians, 1/20).

Saying 'God is Word' is giving a tangible and physical form to God, but saying 'Word is God' is making him subtle as the sound. Whether or not sound is audible, it is present nonetheless everywhere around us, in this world as well as in the cosmos.

'Naad' is also called 'Adi-Mantra' or the first syllable that was pronounced by Brahm at the beginning of creation. 'In the beginning was the word, and the word was with God, and the word was God, the same was in the beginning with God' (Bible, Gospel St. John, 1/1-2); 'these things saith the 'Amen', the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God' (Bible, Revelation, 3/14). The word 'Amen' refers to the Sanskrit counterpart OM. The Chandogya Upanishad asserts, 'Prajapati Brahma or the 'Viraat-Purush' mediated for the purpose of creation of 'Lokas'. Due to his severe 'Tapa' (penances and prolonged mediation), the 'Tri-vidya' (the essential and

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fundamental knowledge of creation represented by the three Vedas, the Rig, Yajur and Sam) sprouted in his bosom or mind, and this knowledge enabled him to speak the first three syllables of creation — (i) 'Bhu', (ii) 'Bhuvaha', and (iii) 'Swaha' . Then Brahma reviewed those words and from them were produced their refined counterparts the letters 'A, U, and M'. These three letters compositely were called 'Omkar' or the sounds which represented 'Pranav' which is the cosmic 'Naad'. Even as veins and capillaries spread out as a net in a leaf of a plant, the whole spectrum of speech and voice is pervaded by 'Omkar'. Verily, 'Omkar' is everything there is' (Chandogya Upanishad, 2/23/2-3).

In 'Chaturvedo Upanishad' it is also mentioned that Brahma turned his face in the four cardinal directions and pronounced the 1st syllables of creation —Bhu, Bhuvaha, Swaha and Janaha. These words crystallised into the Vedas symbolising primary body of knowledge and the various 'Lokas' or worlds.

We have already seen that Brahm, who is represented by the 'Naad' or 'OM' (which is also called 'Pranav'), is eternal and infinite. The Bible says— 'Heaven and earth shall pass away but my worlds shall not pass away' (Gospel of St. Matthew, 24/35; St. Mark, 13/31; St. Luke, 21/33), 'I am the first and the last, the beginning and the end' (Revelation, 22/13).

The Maitrayanu Upanishad of Sam Veda says, 'The revelation of the vital wind force of life called Pran or that faculty which has the power to speak and sing, is 'Omkar'. The 'Omkar' is that 'Pran' manifested as speech. The world that was present in the beginning was the progenitor of all that exists' (5/4).

The Mandukya Upanishad of 'Atharva Veda' says, 'OM is the symbol of Brahm (and its emblem is ' ॐ') who is imperishable and eternal. This cosmos is but a revelation of his stupendous and fascinating glory. This whole creation with its three dimensions of time—the past, the present and the future—is nothing else but 'Omkar'; anything that is beyond these three dimension of time is also 'Omkar' (verse no. 1).

The Bible further says—'and he had a name written, that no man knew, but he himself; . . . and his name is called The Word of God' (Revelation, 19/12-13); 'Jesus said unto them, verily, verily, I say unto

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you, Before Abraham was, I am' (Gospel of St. John, 8/58). The phrases 'I am' and 'his name is called the word of God' and 'the Word was God' are all indicative of the cosmic sound of the 'Naad' which was present in the beginning of creation, was the only companion of Brahm before rest of the creation came into existence, and the word or name given to this sound, that is OM, can be regarded as the symbolic name given to Brahm to identify him from amongst the rest of the creation produced by him.

Taiteriya Upanishad of Krishna Yajur Veda says, 'one should contemplate thus —OM is Brahm, OM is the visible world, OM is an image of this world. OM is invoked at the beginning of everything and at the end of it. Brahm is obtained through OM (8).

The word OM is very dear to Brahm. As the name of any person, when called out respectfully, makes him endeared to the caller, calling out OM reverentially immediately draws the attention of Brahm. OM is similar to an image of a God, though it is subtler than a gross image made up of stone or metal. Since OM is a word, it is indicative of life and Pran because only those who are alive can speak and breathe. Breath or Pran is the visible evidence of life.

Hence, it is the best instrument to invoke the blessing of the supreme, transcendental Lord called Brahm. It is used to start and finish all forms of worship and chanting of Mantras which are divine words or formulas, thereby indicating the 'completion of the cycle of worship or chanting'. It also metaphorically establishes that 'everything started out from Brahm, went its due course, and ultimately fell back or submerged in Brahm'. The symbolism is too obvious and glaring to be ignored.

OM is the primary and primordial, sublime and subtle sound of the cosmos. Its audible manifestations are the various letters forming the alphabets which combined themselves in various permutations and combinations to form words, phrases, sentences and paragraphs etc. which form the basis of any language. A deeper meditation upon this OM reveals that it is actually the all-present cosmic 'Naad' or cosmic sound. Each of the various strands of sounds present in this 'Naad can be heard distinctly by Yogis (ascetic) who are engrossed in meditation. These sounds of Naad' resemble the 'Music' emanating from various musical instruments (Naadbindu Upanishad of the Rig Veda).

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Therefore, whereas OM is the sublime, subtle and un-manifest aspect of sound, which incidentally is the first manifestation of Brahm, its manifest and gross revelation is the speech and voice of a creature. This voice when sung is called 'the Sam' or the song of the ancients as encapsulated in the words of the Vedas, specially the Sam Veda. It is said that 'the essence of speech is the 'Richa' (the hymn of the Vedas), the essence of 'Richa' is the 'Sam' (the song), and the essence of 'Sam' is 'Udgith' (singing of the song) (Chandogya Upanishad of Sam Veda, 1/1/2).

The word OM is a sound symbol representing the supreme reality called Brahm. Brahm is not an object that can be perceived by sense organs, nor can it be comprehended by the mind or a thought that can be reflected upon by the intellect using its discriminatory faculty. It is beyond human comprehension—i.e. it is unknown to humankind. To understand anything which is unknown, one has to proceed from the known factors. An unknown entity cannot be explained by using other unknown factors. Of all the factors known to man, the subtlest is sound. The realm of the 'known' world consists of five elements—earth, water, fire, air and space in progressive order of subtlety. Different permutations and combinations of these five elements constitute the entire realm of factors known to man, which is called the 'creation'.

Of the five elements, Space is the subtlest, and Sound is the essence of space. Sound is created only in space (for instance, the gap between our palms helps us to clap, but in a piece of wood, there is no space, hence no sound can be created). This sound is the subtlest because it can be perceived by only one sense organ, e.g. ear. It directly impinges on the mind and intellect apparatus. It is considered as the very first manifestation of the supreme truth since the un-manifest truth lies just beyond the manifested world. This being so, sound is the best and the subtlest vehicle to transport one from the 'terrestrial world of the known' to the 'transcendental world of the unknown'.

The question is why OM is selected out of all the sounds known to mankind to represent the supreme Brahm. The reason is that this single word represents the entire phenomenon of sound. It consists of three different and distinct sounds—viz. 'A' which is a throat sound, emanating from the root of the tongue; 'U' is created by rolling forward

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of the muscles of the tongue between the root and the lip of the mouth; and the letter 'M' is the concluding sound produced by closing of the lips. Hence all articulate sounds are aptly represented by the three letters A, U, M of the word OM. This word is a coordination of all that is indicative of life because only a living entity can speak, and not a dead entity.

OM represents, therefore, the supreme truth/reality which pervades the three states of consciousness—the Waker (Vishwa), the Dreamer (Taijas) and the Deep-sleeper (Pragna) states of consciousness of the creature in the terrestrial realm of the 'known world' of the creation called microcosm as far as the creature is concerned. The same logic when extended to the cosmos results in OM representing the cosmic Waker (Viraat), the cosmic Dreamer (Hiranyagarbh) and cosmic Deep-sleeper (Eshwara) aspect of macrocosm.

The silence that follows the sounding of the word OM (i.e. after closure of the lips) is called 'AMTRA-OM'. This silence represents the forth state of consciousness called Turiya which is all blissful and a transcendental reality. Since sound emanates (A), expands/progresses (U) and collapses/merges (M) back into space—it naturally follows that space existed before the very advent of sound. Hence this fourth state of conscious ness represents that 'Turiya state' or the pre-sound and post-sound state of all-pervading space. This silence is bliss, serenity, placidity and tranquility.

The word 'Brahmaand' meaning the universe is visualised in this context as a rising and collapsing of the waves of matter from and into the Brahm. The comprehensive knowledge of scriptures enables us to see, by deep mental reflection, that all objects (or matters, elements) are merely reflexes of forms constituted in one, irrefutable and immutable 'Truth'. And this 'truth' is Brahm of the Upanishads.

But the most astounding thing about the cosmic silence is that it is not inert and inane because it has the capacity to generate or create sound. And anything that 'creates' must have a life infusing capability. Taking a leaf from microbiology, a cell must have a nucleus so the space must also, logically, have a nucleus. This nucleus is the Atma or the soul of the cosmos or, in other words, the macrocosmic soul (Parmatma) of the cosmos which is the counterpart of the microcosmic soul (Atma) of the Jiva.

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If there were no silence, we cannot hear the sound. It is the background of the silence which enables us to hear the sound in the first place. Therefore, the word symbol OM represents the entire gamut of manifest world of plurality as well as the un-manifest world of Reality. OM, the sound, represents the former (manifest) world while the silence represents the latter (un-manifest) world. When this all embracing, all-pervading, blissful internal cosmic silence is reached, the seeker becomes one with the Supreme Reality, a state of God or self realisation.

According to Vedanta, the principle by whose mere presence the intellect thinks, the mind feels, and the body perceives, is the 'Subject', the substratum for all the experiences of the body, mind, and intellect. This principle that lends its light to every being is the divine principle OM, or Atma (the Self) residing inside the creature as microcosm as well as residing in the universe as macrocosm known as Brahm. 'The diversity in objects arises only when they are united in some way. Neither identity nor difference, neither existence nor non-existence of object is possible if they are not linked with one another. The ultimate view is that it is the 'one' which has all powers' (Vakyapadiya, 3/1/20-22). And that 'one' —whether perceived as the 'Naad' by a Yogi, or as 'OM' by an Upanishadic sage/seer, or known as 'Pranav' or as Brahm' by them —is the ultimate supreme consciousness which is the Soul of the cosmos, the energy that drives everything in this creation.

According to 'Yogchudamani Upanishad' of Sam Veda, verse no. 74, the letter 'A' resides in the eyes of all creatures during the waking state of consciousness, the letter 'U' is in the throat during the dream state of consciousness, and the letter 'M' is in the heart during the deep sleep state of consciousness. The last stage is the composite word OM which represents the 4th state called the 'Turiya' state of consciousness, which is marked by bliss and beatitude.

Verse nos. 75-79 of the same Upanishad says that the gross 'Viraat Vishwa' is a manifestation of the letter 'A', the subtle radiant form called 'Hiranyagarbh' represents the letter 'U', and the causal, attribute-less, enlightened entity symbolises the letter 'M'. The letter 'A' has the natural quality called 'Rajsic' (worldly desires), its colour is red and it represents the creator of the world, Brahma. The letter 'U' has the natural quality called 'Satvic' (righteousness, virtuousness

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and other noble qualities), its colour is white/gray and it represents the sustainer and caretaker of the world called Vishnu (verse no. 75). The letter 'M' has the natural quality called 'Tamsic' (the lowest of the three qualities), its colour is dark and its stands for the annihilator of the world called 'Rudra'.

In this way, the origin of Brahma, Vishnu and Rudra (Shiva) is deemed to be OM or 'Pranav' which is the esoteric, ethereal and sublime universal cosmic symbol of the Divine Being (Brahm). OM is the transcendental and supreme cause for the origin of all that exists, animate or inanimate. The creator of the world, Brahma, is deemed to be incorporated and inherently present in the letter 'A', Vishnu in the letter 'U' (verse no. 76-77), Rudra (Shiva) in the letter 'M'. It is only OM/Pranav that keeps shining gloriously everywhere (or it remains visible, manifested or revealed at all places in myriad forms) in the cosmos. This OM/Pranav is said to be facing upwards (i.e. it is symbolically uplifting) in wise, erudite, sagacious and enlightened persons, while it faces down (i.e. is degrading, degenerating and denigrating) in stupid and ignorant people (verse no. 78).

It is OM/Pranav that is present everywhere, in every direction, in equal intensity and magnitude. A person who realises or understands this as it is, is indeed an expert in the essential knowledge, tenets, teachings and doctrines of all the Vedas. Amongst enlightened and wise seekers/aspirant, this OM/Pranav is irrevocably, consistently, un-hinderingly and uniformly uplifting for the soul (verse no. 79).

So we see in wonder and awe how our ancient 'seers' could 'peep' into the deep recesses of time and space at a time when there were no electronic gadgets, no satellites, no radars, no radios and no x-ray telescopes or spectrometers or sonometers etc. They simply used their own brain and mind as the radar, there intellect as the computer and radio receiver to catch, comprehend and analyse the subtle sound waves emanating from deep space, a privilege their descendents—we —are denied because of our grossness and indulgence in the artificial world.

The Rig Veda asserts :—'speech is known by the erudite, wise, and scholarly knower of the Vedas to consist of 4 parts. The 1st three of these (the 'Para'—the supreme, transcendental Brahm; the 'Pashyanti' —unformed language, and the 'Madhyama' —mental

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language) remain un-manifested in the depths of one's being. It is only the 4th that people speak'. (Rig Veda, 1/164/5).

According to Hanso-panishad of Shukla Yajur Veda, the 'Naad' or the cosmic sound has 10 varieties of sound or music emanating from it— (i) clinking of bracelets, (ii) tinkling of anklets, (iii) the reverberation and resonating sound of a gong hitting a brass bell, (iv) the blowing of a conch shell, (v) the playing of stringed musical instrument (e.g. lute, harp, guitar), (vi) the clap or clanging sound of crashing cymbals, (vii) the shrill but soothing and haunting sound of a flute, (viii) the beating of tumbrels or elongated drums, (ix) the sound of kettle drums, and (x) the rumbling and thundering of clouds (verse no. 16-17).

The various subtle sounds emanating from the cosmic 'Naad', which essentially consist of vibrations in the ether, have been elaborately described in 'Naad Bindu Upanishad' of the Rig Veda. In the beginning, the aspirant simply hears a roar of some distant ocean, but this rises to an all-engulfing crescendo which literally drowns the conscious part of his brain. By and by, he starts differentiating between the various hues and shades of sound which acquire resemblance to the sound of various musical instruments playing together, and later on playing separately like in a stereophonic orchestra. The highly evolved mind-intellect of an enlightened ascetic is able to distinctly hear these individual strands of sounds in the form of the cosmic music emanating from Brahm.

As a result of this 'Naad', the body witnesses many apparent reflexes. The reflex actions of the muscles in the body are involuntarily controlled by the brain. When the nerves of the brain —which is actually an electronic circuit consisting of a fine maze of ganglions, nerve fibers and nerve ending much like an integrated circuit of a computer —are impacted by these sound waves emanating from the cosmic 'Naad' which tend to interfere with and modify their working much like the interference of the electronically charged particles of the solar wind with the radio transmission on earth, the impulses or electric signals which are given by the brain to other parts of the body also get effected or modified. This results in the muscles of the body reacting differently to different wavelengths or frequencies of the various sound waves emanating from the sea of sound called the

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'Naad'. Each individual reaction of the body will therefore correspond to particular frequencies or wavelength that the aspirant is hearing at that instant. As a natural corollary, it follows that by observing the reflexes of the aspirant's body, we can determine at what spiritual level he is prevailing at that moment.

The 1st sound (according to verse no. 17 of Hansopanishad) is a tickling sensation. The 2nd sound creates tense or taut muscles leading to spasms. The 3rd sound leads to perspiration breaking out from the body. The 4th sound creates tremors in the head (verse no. 18). The 5th sound creates saliva to dribble out of the mouth. The 6th sound causes 'a rain of Amrit' (which is a metaphor for tears of bliss). The 7th sound bestows upon the aspirant the blessing of being acquainted with the profoundest and most secret of knowledge. The 8th sound enables the aspirant to speak in mystical language. [That is, he can speak in any tongue, he can speak of things unknown, he can speak of the wisest of things, his speech has the potent and prowess of divine powers] (verse no. 99). The 9th sound enables the aspirant to make himself invisible and he acquires the so-called '3rd eye' having mystical and divine powers of insight and infinite vision. Finally, when the aspirant hears the 10th sound, he acquires the transcendental and eclectic knowledge pertaining to the supreme Brahm, and as a result, he experiences or witnesses Brahm first hand (verse no. 20).

Hence, OM is the best instrument to invoke the blessing of the supreme, transcendental Lord or Brahm. It is used to start and finish all religious worship thereby indicating the completion of the cycle of the worship. It also metaphorically establishes that 'everything started off from Brahm, went its due course, and ultimately fell back or merged or coalesced with Brahm. The symbolism is too obvious and glaring to be ignored.

So, in conclusion we can say that neat categorisation of 'Naad' or 'OM' is not in accordance with the pluralistic, holistic approach of ancient Indian tradition. Hence, to categorise and define 'Naad' and 'OM' separately will be against that tradition. The above discussion is simply to emphasis that whether the Upanishad talks about the 'Naad' or 'OM' or 'Pranav' or 'Brahm' or 'Brahmaand' (universe/cosmos/world), they ultimately mean and speak of the same thing. The allusions, the allegories, the metaphors, the analogies may be different, but the essence is the same.

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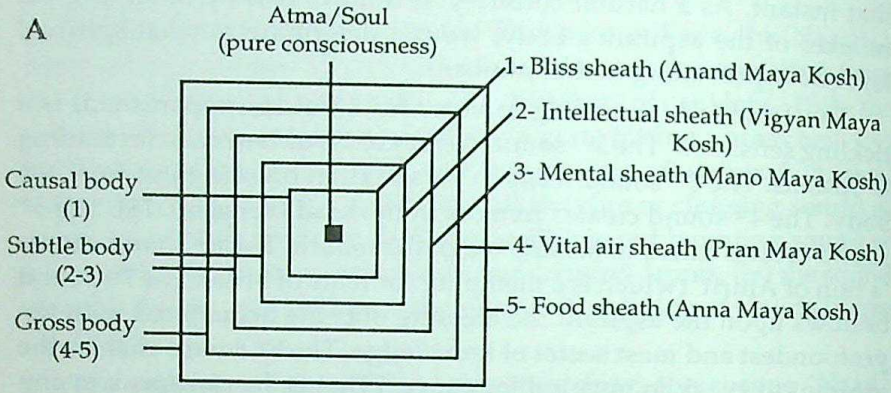
Diagram of various sheaths and 3 bodies of the creature

A



B

Food Sheath (Physical Body)

Organs of perception
1- Eyes; 2- Ears; 3- Nose; 4- Skin; 5- Tongue

Organs of Action
1- Hands; 2- Legs; 3- Mouth; 4- Genitals; 5- Anus/excretion organs

C

Vital Air Sheath (Panch Pran)

1- Faculty of perception (Prana)—It controls all the perceptions

2- Faculty of excretion (Apana)—Controls excretion

3- Faculty of digestion (Samana)—Controls digestion

4- Faculty of circulation (Vyana)—Power by which food is used and circulated and distributed in the whole body

5- Faculty of thinking (Udana)—Capacity to acqure, assimilate, absob and filter through knowledge and thought

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There are 3 levels of existence—the gross body, the subtle body and the causal body of the creature. When the pure consciousness (Atma, soul) which resides inside the causal body detaches itself from the subtle body and the gross body as during meditation, the supreme blissful state is attained. The following diagram will clarify the picture

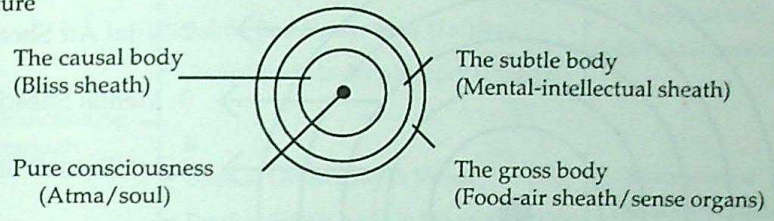

Figure I

During Samadhi, the soul is freed from the outer two sheaths. Hence bliss is obtained.

Further, pure consciousness (Atma/soul) has three personalities depending upon its interaction with these three bodies as follows :–

1- Pure consciousness functioning through the gross body is called the Waking State
2- Pure consciousness functioning throught the subtle body is called the Dream State
3- Pure consciousness functioning throught the causal body is called the Deep Sleep State

When the 3rd stage is reached, the experience of duality or pleurality is removed and bliss is achieved. But actual 'enlightenment' is the removal of all these three bodies entervening between the soul/Atma and the surrounding space. As soon as it is done, the microcosmic soul expands to cover the whole vast space around it—which was hitherto restricted by the above three so-called sheaths or coverings—to become one with him who is identified as the macrocosmic Soul or Brahma. It then fills the whole space.

Hence, the individual creature becomes the pure consciousness (the Atma/soul) surrounded by the three sheaths as in figure one above which act as barriers to its freedom. When these three limiting factors or barriers are removed, there remains no barrier or obstacle between the Micro and Macro souls, and they become one.

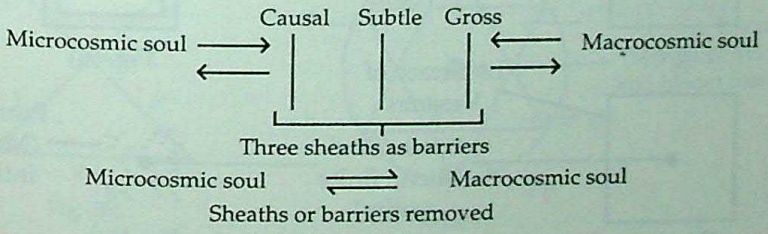

Figure II

The reader should also refer to Lanka Kand, Canto 1, verse no. 53 in this context.

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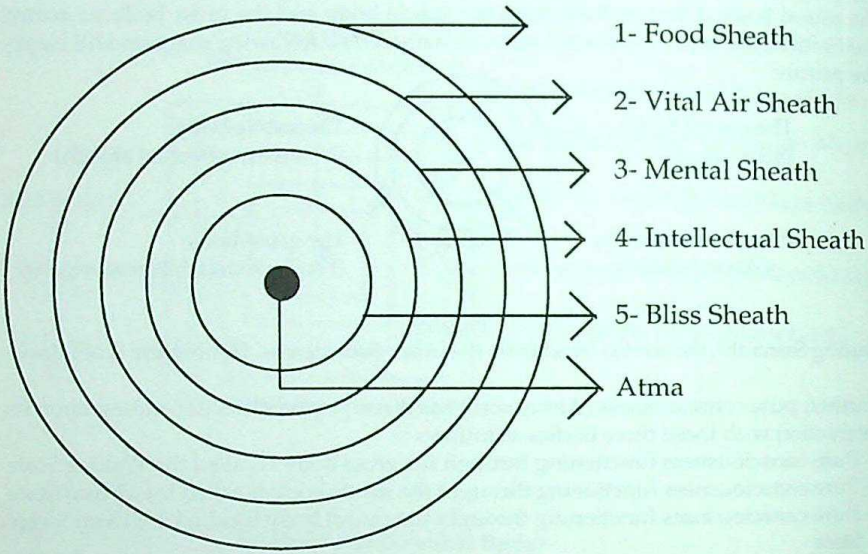
The 5 Sheaths and Atma



Merging of Microcosmic Soul with Macrocosmic Soul

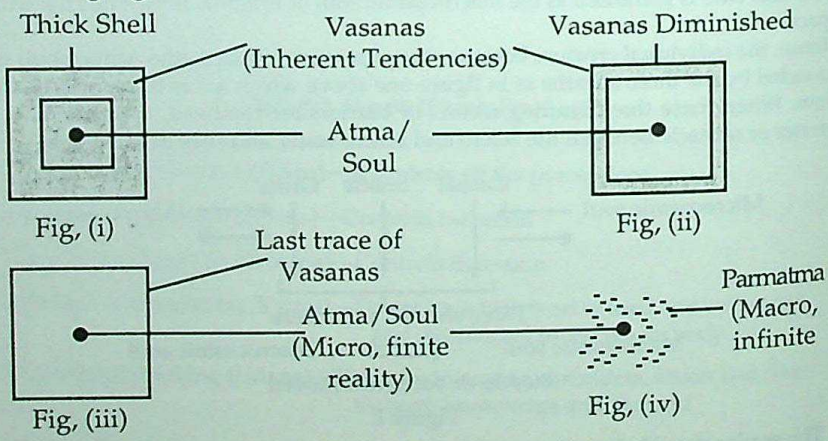


Figure shows how Atma merges with Parmatma by controlling Vasanas or Vrities

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1 Functioning of Pure Consciousness

'Pure Consciousness' Functioning through

A
- Gross Body is waker (Vishwa)
- Subtle Body is dreamer (Taizasa)
- Causal Body is deep sleeper (Pragna)

'Microcosmic' (Individual creature)

B
- Total of Gross body is Viraat
- Total of Subtle body is Hiranya Garbha
- Total of Causal body is Ishwar

'Macrocosmic' (The all-pervading Supreme Lord)

2 Diagram depicting how Microcosm merges with Macrocosm

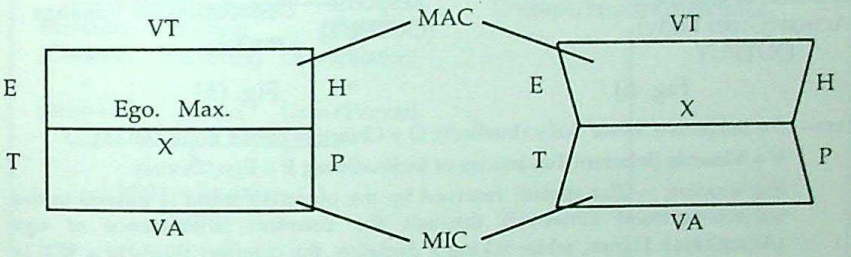

Fig (i) Fig (ii)

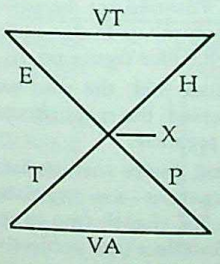

Fig (iii)

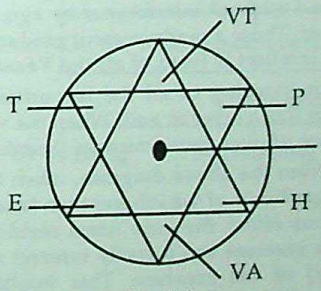

Fig (iv)

Key—VT = Viraat (Cosmic waker); VA = Vishwa (Waker); P = Pragna (Deep sleeper); T = Taijasa (Dreamer); H = Hiranya Garbha (Cosmic dreamer); E = Ishwar (Cosmic deep sleeper; X = Inherent tendency or demarcation line representing 'perceiver-feeler-thinker-doer'; Amta = Microcosmic pure self of individual; Braham = Macrocosmic Soul of the universe; MAC = Macrocosm; MIC = Microcosm;

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Diagram showing how Ego and desires effect the Mind

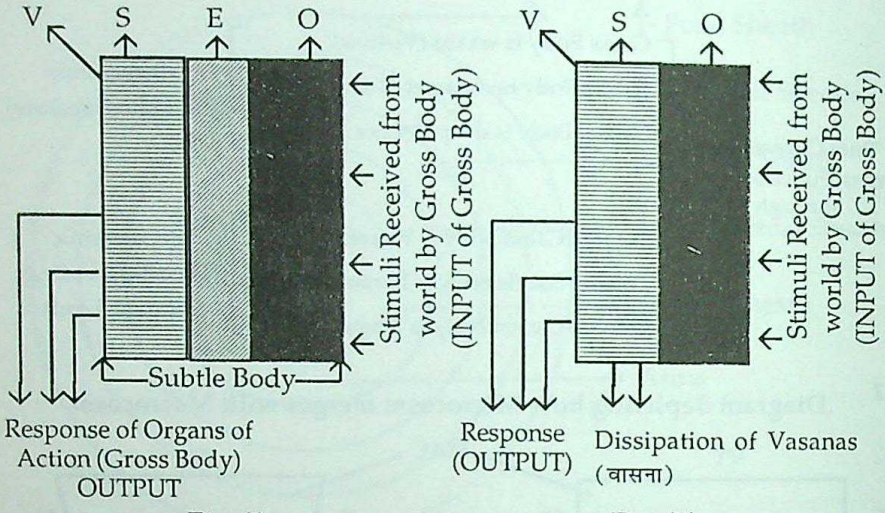

Fig. (i) Fig. (ii)

Key— S = Subjective Subtle Body (Intellect); O = Objective Subtle Body (Mind); V = Vāsanās (Inherent Tendencies or Inclinations); E = Ego/Desires

Explanation :—The stimuli received by the objective mind is passed to the subjective mind (intellect) through the constant interference of ego (Ahaṃkāra). Hence, while taking a decision, the intellect (Buddhi = बुद्धि) is influenced by the intervening ego (refer figure no. i)

When ego is removed, there is direct coordination between the mind and the intellect and the former receives proper guidance from the latter. When actions are performed without interference by ego, no fresh Vāsanās are deposited in the intellect. Those already present gradually dissipate away. In due course of time, the intellect is freed of all the Vāsanās as well (refer figure no. ii).

This helps in purging of all the impurities associated with the soul and enveloping it like a layer or veil. When the veil is removed, the magnificence and brilliance of pure consciousness illuminates the creature.

As is clear from the above diagram, when the ego and desire—which form the basic ingredients of the inherent tendencies of a creature—are dissipated by industrious effort, the pure Ātmā residing in the 3rd sheath (the causal body) of the creature can directly interact with the Intellect (the subjective subtle body) of the creature. This intellect is not now subject to any interference from Vāsanās (fig. ii), and can act independently. The actions become pure, uncorrupted and scrupulous. The emphasis here is to put the intellect directly under the command of the Ātmā/soul without the interference of Vāsanās, ego, desires and other inherent tendencies or inclinations that mire the soul as a result of (a) its past deeds and their results and (b) unfulfilled desires.

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Uttar Kand, Canto 5, verse no. 18 and verse no. 40.

PERSONALITY OF MAN

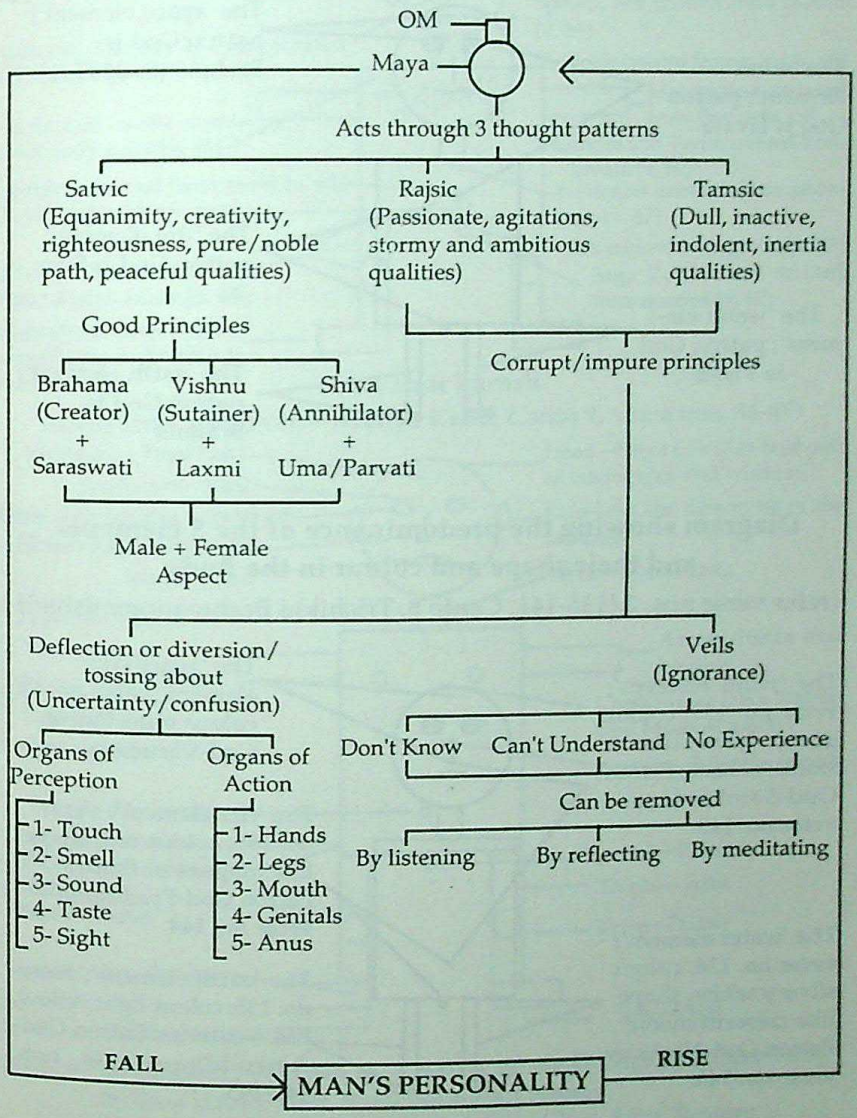

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Diagram showing the predominance of the 5 elements and their patron Gods in the Body

(refer verse nos. 4-6, Canto 8, Jābāladarśanopaniṣad)

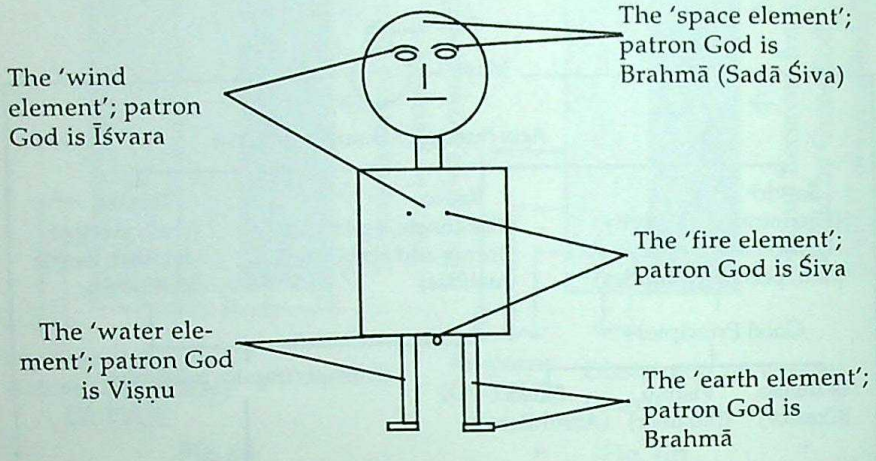

Diagram showing the predominance of the 5 elements and their shape and colour in the Body

(refer verse nos. 2/135-141, Canto 8, Trishikhi Brahmanopanishad)

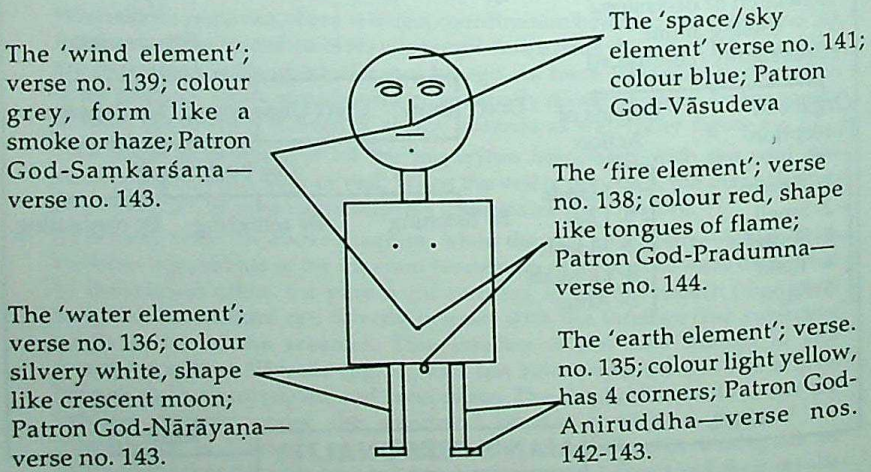

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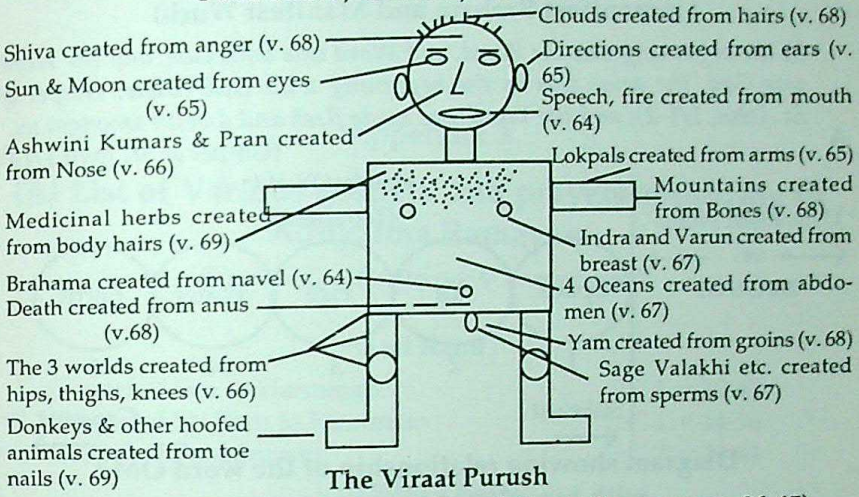
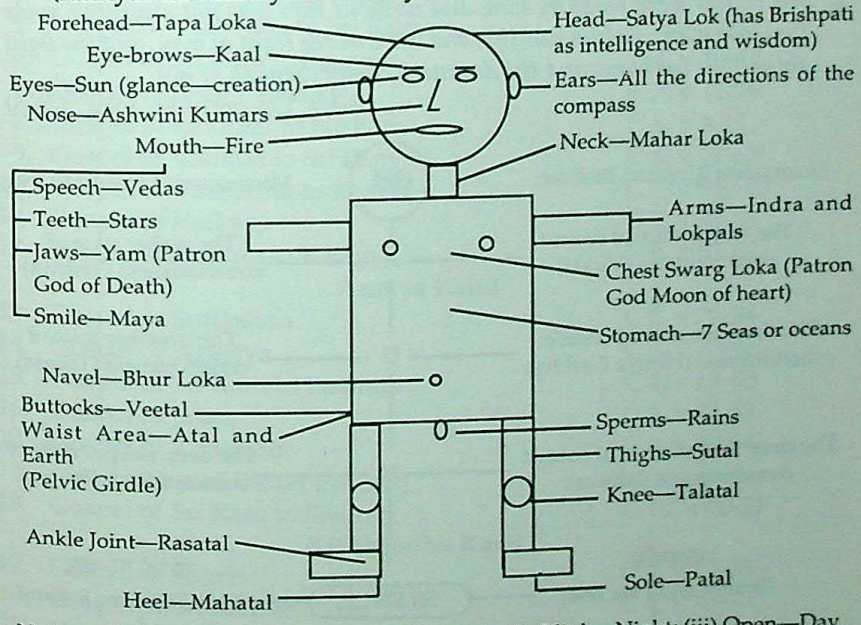
Diagram of Creation of the World from Viraat Purush
Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 63-69



The Viraat Purush
(Adhyatma Ramayan—Aranya Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 36-45)



Note :— (a) Eyes (Sun) = (i) Glances—Creation; (ii) Blink—Night; (iii) Open—Day
(b) Body Hairs = Trees, Medicinal herbs, Creepers
(d) Enlightenment/Wisdom/Knowledge = Glory, Fame, Renown

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Diagram showing relationship between Unmanifest Braham and Manifest World

In the beginning was the Word, and Word was with God, and the Word was God, the same was in the beginning with God (Bible, Gospel of St. John, 1/1-2); and the Word was made flesh and dwelth amongst us.
(Gospel of St. John 1/14)

A

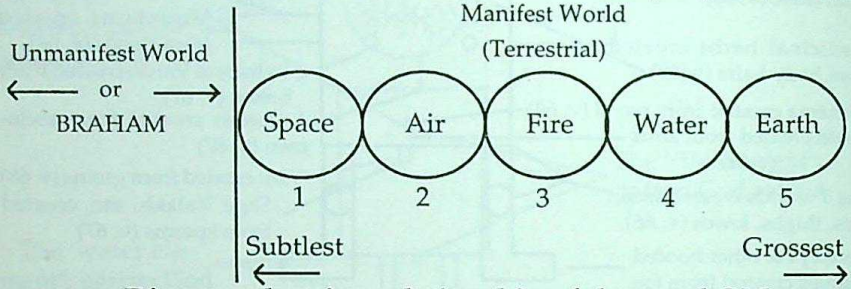
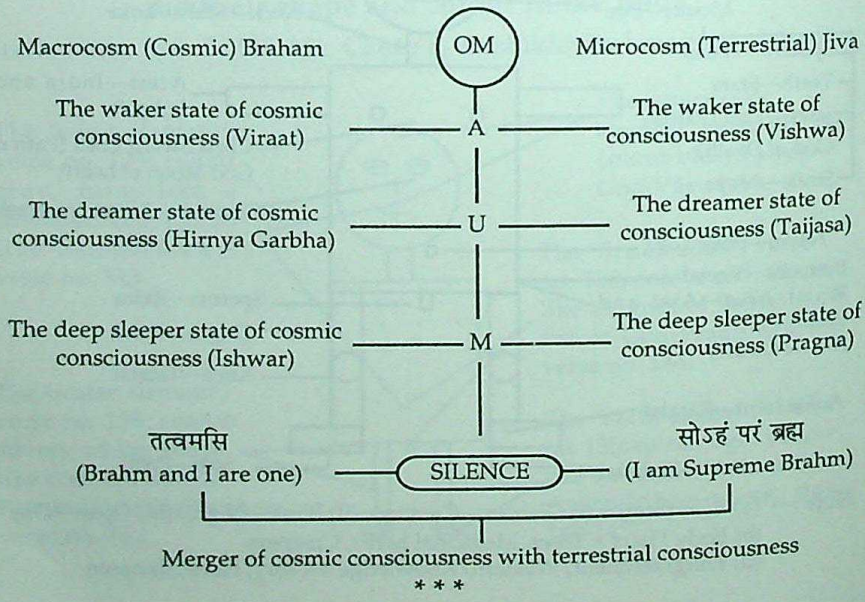


Diagram showing relationship of the word OM with two planes of consciousness

B *All things were made by him, and without him was not anything made that was made. In him was life, and life was the light of men, and the light shineth in darkness and the darkness comprehended it not*
(Bible, Gospel of St. John, 1/3-5)



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Appendix 3

(A) List of Various gospels and prayers appearing in Adhyatma Ramayan

(Key :— C = Canto no; V = verse no.)

	Baal Kand	
1.	Gospel of Sita to Hanuman	C 1, v 30-43
2.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Hanuman	C 1, v 44-56
3.	Gospel of Parashuram	C 7, v 29-43
	Ayodhya Kand	
4.	Gospel of Narad to Sri Ram	C 1, v 10-31
5.	Gospel of Vashistha to Sri Ram	C 2, v 22-32
6.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Laxman	C 4, v 19-47
7.	Gospel of Sage Bamdeo	C 5, v 11-29
8.	Gospel of Laxman to Nishad	C 6, v 4-15
9.	Gospel of Valmiki to Sri Ram	C 6, v 52-63
10.	Gospel of Vashistha to Bharat	C 7, v 95-107
11.	Gospel of Kaikeyi	C 9, v 55-68
12.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Kaikeyi	C 9, v 63-67
	Aranya Kand	
13.	Gospel of Sutikshan	C 2, v 28-34
14.	Gospel of Agastya	C 3, v 20-42
15.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Laxman	C 4, v 19-55
16.	Gospel of Jatau	C 8, v 44-53
17.	Gospel of Kabandh (description of Viraat Purush)	C 9, v 30-54
18.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Shabari	C 10, v 20-31
	Kishkindha Kand	
19.	Gospel of Sugriv	C 1, v 77-93
20.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Tara	C 3, v 13-33
21.	Gospel of Sri Ram to Laxman (Kriya Yog)	C 4, v 11-40
22.	Gospel of Swayam Prabha	C 6, v 61-77

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23. Gospel of Hanuman to Angad	C 7, v 16-23
24. Gospel of Chandrma to Sampati (Embryoolgy)	C 8, v 12-47
Sundar Kand	
25. indirect Gospel of Ravana (Oxymoron type of Gospel)	C 2, v 23-28
26. Gospel of Hanuman to Ravana	C 4, v 15-25
Lanka Kand	
27. Gospel of Kumbhakarn	C 2, v 14-18
28. Gospel of Vibhishan to Ravana	C 2, v 37-43
29. Ram's Gospel to Vibhishan	C 3, v 38-41
30. Gospel of Vibhishan	C 3, v 17-37
31. Gospel of Sri Ram	C 3, v 38-41
32. Gospel of the ocean	C 3, v 71-78
33. Gospel of demon Shuk	C 4, v 40-56
34. Gospel of Malywan to Ravana	C 5, v 33-36
35. Gospel of Kalnemi	C 6, v 46-63
36. Gospel of Kumbhakarn	C 7, v 57-70
37. Gospel of Narad	C 8, v 34-52
38. Gospel of Ravana to Mandodari	C 10, v 36-42
39. Gospel of Mandodari	C 10, v 44-54
40. Gospel of Ravana	C 10, v 55-61
41. Gospel of Narad to Gods	C 11, v 83-87
42. Gospel of Laxman to Vibhishan	C 12, v 10-27
43. Gospel of Brahama, the creator	C13, v 10-18
44. Gospel of Indra	C 13, v 24-32
45. Gospel of Bharadwaj	C 14, v 21-34
46. Gospel of Lord Shiva	C 15, v 51-63
47. Prayer of Indra	C 15, v 64
48. Prayer of Gods	C 15, v 65
49. Prayer of Ancestors	C 15, v 66
50. Prayer of Yakshas	C 15, v 67
51. Prayer of Gandharvas	C 15, v 68-69
Uttar Kand	
52. Gospel of sage Agastya	C 1, v 61-63
53. Gospel of sage Agastya	C 2, v 63-77
54. Gospel of Sanat Kumar to Ravana	C 3, v 33-36
55. Ram Gita	C 5, Full Chapter

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56. Gospel of Valmiki to Kush	C 6, v 38-56
57. Gospel of Sri Ram to Kaushalya	C 7, v 53-82
58. prayer of Kaal	C 8, v 22-36

Note

The various tenets and teachings propounded and enunciated in Adhyatma Ramayan are of profound and deep spiritual importance. They are more often than not disguised as prayers, for that was the methodology adopted by ancient sages who authored the scriptures. However, many of them are very direct in their approach as teachings, while others go about it in the round about way disguised as prayers—but essentially they are nothing else but gospels nevertheless. Read in the correct perspective, they assume great significance—they stop being adulatory prayers and instead become supreme tenets and axioms encapsulating the essence of the Vedic philosophy.

Hence, the above list presents a comprehensive picture of all such gospels-cum-prayers contained in Adhyatma Ramayan. As a matter of fact, it is this aspect which distinguishes 'this' Ramayan from all other versions of the story of Sri Ram because the author's (Veda Vyas') stupendous grasp and understanding of Vedant is reflected in this work. We must remember that Veda Vyas was no ordinary narrator or scribe, neither was he an ordinary teacher. Taken all in all, the above gospels bring out the best in spiritual treasure that our ancient scriptures are famed the world over for.

* * *

यो ब्रह्माणं विदधाति पूर्वं यो वै वैदुषाँ प्रहिणोति तस्मै।
तँ ह देवमात्मबुद्धिप्रकाशं मुमुक्षुर्वै शरणमहं प्रपद्ये।।

(श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषद ६/१८)

The supreme Soul (Brahm) created Brahma first and gave him the (knowledge of the) Vedas. He is the light of pure enlightenment and kindles self-realisation. He pervades the whole of the creation. I, the seeker of emancipation and salvation, take the refuge of the supreme Braham.

(Shwetashawtar Upanishad 6/18)

* * *

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अयोध्यानगरे रत्नचित्रसौवर्णमण्डपे । मन्दारपुष्पैराबद्धविताने तोरणान्विते।।
सिंहासनसमासीनं पुष्पकोपरि राघवम् । रक्षोभिर्हरिभिर्देवैः सुविमानगतैः शुभैः।।
संस्तूयमानं मुनिभिः प्रह्वैश्च परिसेवितम् । सीतालंकृतवामालं लक्ष्मणेनोपष्ठोभितम्।।
श्यामं प्रसन्नवदनं सर्वाभरणभूषितम्। (ना० पुराण, पूर्व० 73/68-71)

Prayer

In the city of Ayodhya, there is a marvelously majestic pavilion studded with gems and jewels. It has a canopy of flowers of the Kalpa tree [the Nyctanthes arvor tristis tree; the Mandaar tree] over it and decorated with festoons of flowers and green leaves. Inside it, Raghav (Sri Ram) is seated on a divine and glorious throne aboard the celestial plane (of Kuber) called Pushpak. The auspicious Gods, monkeys, demons and humble and submissive sages/seers/hermits/monks/ascetic etc. have assembled to pray and serve the Lord. Sita adorns his left side while goddess Laxmi his right. He has a glowing, radiant dark complexion. His face is cheerful and he is adorned with all types of ornaments and royal regalia (Narad Puran, Purvardh, 73/68-71).

* * *

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B. Assortment of representative verses highlighting the following selective ideas and concepts

(Key :— C = Canto no; v = verse no.)

1. **Maya—Its nature, form and definition (sample verses)**
   (a) Baal Kand, C 3, v 22-23; C 7, v 32-33.
   (b) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 11.
   (c) Aranya Kand, C 1, v 13; C 3, v 20-24, 31-33; C 4, v 20-27.
   (d) Kishkindha Kand, C 1, v 86-90; C 2, v 86-90; C 6, 71-72; C 7, v 17.
   (e) Lanka Kand, C 2, v 40-41; C 3, v 73-78 C 6, v 49-56; C 15, v 53, 60.
   (f) Uttar Kand, C 3, v 48-49; C 5, v 17-20, 60 etc.
2. **Vidya-Avidya (sample verses)**
   (a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 23, 30; C 7, v 40-41.
   (b) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 28-29.
   (c) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 32-35; C 4, v 38-39.
   (d) Kishkindha Kand, C 1, v 87-90; C 3, v 18-32.
   (e) Sundar Kand, C 4, v 15-25.
   (f) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 51-54; C 3, v 31-33; C 4, v 43-56; C 10, v 36-42; C 11, v 20-25.
   (g) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 9-23, 36, 45; C 7, v 38-56.
3. **Sat, Raj, Tam qualities (sample verses)**
   (a) Baal Kand, C 3, v 22-23.
   (b) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 11-12; C 5, v 13-15.
   (c) Aranya Kand, C 2, v 20-27, 30; C 3, v 24-31; C 5, v 13-15; C 8, v 52.
   (d) Kishkindha Kand, C 3, v 25; C 6, v 64-66.
   (e) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 71-75; C 6, v 51-52.
   (f) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 33; C 6, v 45-50, 56; C 7, v 61-63 etc.
4. **Adhyatma Ramayan's secular broad outlook (sample verses)**
   (a) Uttar Kand, C 7, v 75-81 etc.
5. **Atma/Parmatma—true nature (sample verses)**
   (a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 44-56.
   (b) Ayodhya Kand, C 7, v 95-107.
   (c) Aranya Kand, C 4, v 30-37, 40-47.
   (d) Kishkindha Kand, C 3, v 13-33; C 8, v 43-47.

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(e) Sundar Kand, C 4, v 17-22.
(f) Lanka Kand, C 1, v. 51-53; C 2, v 38-39; C 3, v 73-78; C 4, v 40-50; C 6, v 49-51; C 10, v 36-42; C 11, v 17-23; C 15, v 60.
(g) Uttar Kand, C 3, v 48-49; full C 5; C 7, v 77-78 etc.

6. **Ways of devotion and worship (sample verses)**
(a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 50-52; C 2, v 20-21; C 7, v 40-41.
(b) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 34-35; C 4, v 48-51; C 10, v 20-31.
(c) Kishkindha Kand, C 4, v 11-40.
(d) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 31-37; C 6, v 57-63; C 7, v 67-69; C 8, v 44-45.
(e) Uttar Kand, C 3, v 52-53, C 7, v 59-83.

7. **True nature/form of Sri Ram (sample verses)**
(a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 11-43; C 3, v 22-23; C 4, v 12-13; C 5, v 43-57.
(b) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 11-31; C 2, v 22-32; C 5, v 11-29; C 9, v 42-46, 61-62, 92.
(c) Aranya Kand, C 1, v 41; C 2, v 15-16, 28-34; C 5, v 61; C 6, v 28-29; C 8, v 44-53; C 9, v 30-54.
(d) Kishkindha Kand, C 5, v 17-24; C 6, v 68-77; C 7, v 16-23.
(e) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 49-54; C 2, v 15-16, 35-43; C 3, v 17-30, 71-78; C 4, v 40-56; C 5, v 34-35; C 6, v 63; C 7, v 44-45, 58, 64; C 8, v 34-49, note of 68; C 10, v 45-52; C 13, v 3-7, 10-18, 24-32; C 14, v 21-35; C 15, v 5-8, 51-61; C 16, v 45-49.
(f) Uttar Kand, C 1, v 61-63; C 2, v 72-77; C 3, v 25-28, 45-53; C 4, v 12; C 7, v 54-55 and 68 footnote; C 9, v 52-53.

8. **Residence of Sri Ram (sample verses)**
(a) Ayodhya Kand, C 6, v. 52-64
(b) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 38-41

9. **Demons—description of Ravana's army and Lanka**
(a) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 17-26; C 4, v 10-12.
(b) Chief demon commanders—Lanka Kand, C 2, v 22.
(c) Other demons who joined battle :— Lanka Kand C 5, v 80.

10. **Monkeys—(i) description of monkey army**
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 6, v 5-19.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 30-40; C 4, v 25-39.

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(ii) Chief monkey commanders

(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 6, v 11-18, 23-24.

(b) Lanka Kand, C 4, v 28-38.

(iii) Monkeys who led the first assault on Lanka

(a) Lanka Kand, C 5, v 55-56.

11. Weapons used during the epic war

(a) by monkeys—Lanka Kand, C 5, v 56-57, 83; C 7, v 41; C 9, v 17.

(b) by demons—Lanka Kand, C 5, v 57-58, 82; C 9, v 18-19.

(c) by Sri Ram and Ravana in the final duel—Lanka Kand, C 11, v 27-32, 45, 54-57, 61-72.

12. Duration of the epic war

Lanka Kand, C 5, v 46 to C 9, v 59.

13. Jiva/creature

(a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 48-52; C 7, v 34-37.

(b) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 20-23.

(c) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 32-33; C 4, v 27-35; C 9, v 32.

(d) Kishkindha Kand, C 3, v 15-16, 18-19, 25.

(e) Lanka Kand, C 6, v 51-52.

(f) Uttar Kand, C 5 v 18 footnote, v 40 footnote.

14. The Mahavakyas (the great sayings) of the Vedas

(a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 50-52; C 7, v 40-47.

(b) Lanka Kand, C 8, v 40-43.

(c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 27.

15. The 3 states of consciousness

(a) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 53.

(b) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 28-35.

16. Ravana realised Sri Ram's true nature

(a) Aranya Kand, C 5, v 58-61; C 6, v 30-35; C 7 v 65.

(b) Sundar Kand, C 2, v 15-19.

(c) Lanka Kand, C 7, v 44-47; C 10, 55-61.

(d) Uttar Kand, C 3, v 31-42.

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स वा इदं विश्वममोघलीलः सृजत्यवत्यत्ति न सज्जतेऽस्मिन्।
भूतेषु चान्तर्हित आत्मतन्त्रः षाड्वर्गिकं जिघ्रति षड्गुणेशः।।
न चास्य काश्चिन्निपुणेन धातुरवैति जन्तुः कुमनीष ऊतीः।
नामानि रूपाणि मनोवचोभिः संतन्वतो नटचर्यामिवाज्ञः।।

(श्रीमद्भा० 1/3/36-37)

The playful sporting activities of the Lord are indescribable. He creates, sustains and annihilates the world as if it was a mere game, but he does never become engrossed or attached with it. Concealed in the bosom of the creature, he accepts the objects of the sense organs and the mind, being the controlling factor of the two, but remains aloof from those objects (i.e. both the pleasures and sorrows associated with this world). He is totally independent of such mundane worthless considerations— the materialistic objects of the world can never lure/entice him. Even as a non-initiated man does not understand tricks played by a magician, the ignorant and un-wise creature cannot realise or comprehend the myriad names, forms and maveric activities undertaken by the Lord by involving themselves in endless debates, discussions and logic, for the latter cannot explain the former which have been conceived and created by the Lord himself by his wish and which are attempted to be explained by the Vedas (which have, by the way, failed to do so by saying 'Neti-Neti' i.e. neither this nor that). [Srimad Bhagwat no. 1/3/36-37]

* * *

पवित्रं चरित्रं विचित्रं त्वदीयं नरा ये स्मरन्त्यन्वहं रामचन्द्रम् ।
भवन्तं भवान्तं भरन्तं भजन्तो लभन्ते कृतान्तं न पश्चन्त्याऽन्ते।।

(आदि शंकराचार्य रामभुजंगप्रयात स्तोत्र)

Oh Sri Ram! Those who remember your pure, divine, holy and outworldly mysterious sportly activities in this world, cross over this world-ocean. They do not have to see (or fear from) the face of death. (Adi Shankaryacharya's Ram Bhujung prayat Stotra).

***

एतन्मन्त्रमगस्त्यस्तु जप्त्वा रुद्रत्वमाप्नुयात्। ब्रह्मत्वं काश्यपो जप्त्वा कौशिकस्त्वमरेशताम्।।
कार्तिकेयो मनुत्वं च इन्द्रार्कौ गिरिनारदौ । बालखिल्यादिमुनयो देवतात्वं प्रपेदिरे।।

(वृद्धहारित-स्मृति, 6 अध्याय)

By worshipping the holy name of Sri Ram, sage Agastya acquired the potential powers of Rudra, sage Kashyap became equivalent to Brahma, sage Kaushik attained immortality, Kartikeya was designated as a Manu (the first male) while Indra, the Sun, mountains, sage Narad and Baalkha etc. were elevated to the exalted stature of God-hood. (Vridha harit-smirti, chapter 6)

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Appendix 4

Indicative list of explanatory diagrams, charts, explanatory and elaboratory notes

(Key—C = Canto no; v = verse no.)

1. **Brahmins in Lanka :—**
   (a) Lanka Kand, C 12, v 44-46.
2. **Burning of Lanka :—**
   (a) Sundar Kand, C 3, v 74-75, C 4, v 39-34 Footnote.
3. **Vaali scolds Sri Ram :—**
   (a) Kishkindha Kand, C 2, v 58-61.
4. **Compass— example of :—**
   (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 57.
5. **Creation of world :—**
   (a) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 27.
   (b) Uttar Kand, C 8, v 22-28.
6. **Creature/Jiva :—**
   (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 40.
   (b) Kishkindha Kand, C 8, v 20-21.
7. **Creation of Maya :—**
   (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 18.
8. **Creation :—**
   the basic 24 ingredients—
   (a) Lanka Kand, C 4, v 43 footnote.
   the 17 elements—
   (a) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 20-21.
   (b) Lanka Kand, C 4, v 43-44.
   (c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 29.
   creation of 7 elements—
   (a) Aranya Kand, C 9, v 35-36.
9. **Doer-feeler-thinker-perceiver**
   (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 15, 34, 45, 55 and footnotes
10. **Deeds vs. Gyan**
    (a) Uttar Kand C 5, v 1-20.
11. **Ego—how it mires the soul & how to eliminate it :—**
    (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 47; C 6, v 56.
12. **Hanuman's departure for Himalayas for Tapa :—**
    (a) Lanka Kand, C 16, v 17-18.
13. **Hanuman conveys Sita's message to Sri Ram :—**
    (a) Sundar Kand, C 5, v 36-37
14. **Hanuman's launch into the air :—**
    (a) Sundar Kand, C 5, v 9-13.
15. **Mahavakyas of the Vedas :—**
    (a) Lanka Kand, C 8, v 40-43.
16. **Microcosm and Macrocosm :—**
    (a) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 25-27.
    (b) Kishkindha Kand, C 8, v 43-44.
    (c) Lanka Kand, C 14, v 29-30.
    (d) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 40, 46-47.
17. **Mind-concentration of :—**
    (a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 46.
18. **Monkeys' depressed state of mind :—**
    (a) Kishkindha Kand, C 7, v 32-33; C 9, v 6-7.
19. **Monkeys— a civilised class :—**
    (a) Kishkindha Kand, C 5, v 63.

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20. Moon— example of :—
(a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 57.
21. 'Neti-Neti'— the concept of :—
(a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 15, 34 and footnote
22. 'Om'— the concept of :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 13, v 43-44; C 6, v 10-13.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 48-51.
23. Personality of man :—
(a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 18-40
24. Ram's welcome in Ayodhya :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 14, v 73-74.
25. Ram's family tree :—
(a) Uttar Kand, end of Canto 9.
26. Ravana's determination to oppose Sri Ram :—
(a) Uttar Kand, C 2, v 60-62; C 3, v 58-59; C 4, v 51-52.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 8, v 67-68; C 10, v 51-52, 55-61.
27. Ravana's family tree :—
(a) Uttar Kand, end of Canto 2.
28. Revival of monkeys after the war :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 13, v 39-40.
29. Ram's exile :—
(a) Ayodhya Kand, C 5, v 30-32, 40-45, 56-58;
C 9, v 33, 36-37, 47-51.
30. Ram's human behaviour :—
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 5, v 20-24.
31. Ravana's last instructions to Mandodari :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 10, v 43-44.
32. Ravana gets to taste his own medicine :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 10, v 15-16.
33. Ravana betrayed :—
(a) Sundar Kand, C 1, v 48-49.
34. Ravana's positive aspects :—
(a) Aranya Kand, C 6, v 61.
(b) Sundar Kand, C 2, v 15-17.
(c) Lanka Kand, C 11, v 70-72.
(d) Uttar Kand, C 2, v 28-29.
35. Sugriv's incredulous behaviour :—
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 5, v 48-50.
36. Sacred sites :—
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 6, v 83.
37. Samadhi :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 51-53.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 46-58.
38. States of consciousness/ existence :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 1, v 53.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 28-35, 39-47.
39. Sheaths covering the Atma/ soul :—
(a) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 20-23.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 2, v 38-39.
(c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 28-34, 40.
40. Shaaligram :—
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 4, v 13-14.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 4, v 24.
41. Subterranean worlds (Patals) :—
(a) Aranya Kand, C 9, v 36-38.
42. Sat, Raj, Tam— the 3 qualities of creature
(a) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 22-24.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 6, v 51-52.
(c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 18, 40, 56; C 6, v 56.
43. Saints— true :—
(a) Aranya Kand, C 3, v 37-39.
44. Society— classification :—
(a) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 11-12.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 7.
45. Six faults :—
(a) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 29-30.
46. Sita's purity test :—
(a) Uttar Kand, C 4, v 51-52; C 7, v 18-19, 32-33, 40-41.

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47. **Sita dropping her ornaments :—**
(a) Aranya Kand, C 7, v 61-65.
48. **Secular credentials :—**
(a) Uttar Kand, C 7, v 77-78.
49. **Tara's delight :—**
(a) Kishkindha Kand, C 5, v 40-41.
50. **Vibhishan— a turn-coat :—**
(a) Lanka Kand, C 2, v 46; C 11, v 54-57; C 12, 31-33.
51. **Vibhishan's dilemma :—**
(a) Lanka Kand, C 8, v 15-16.
52. **Vibhishan vs Sugrive in devotion :—**
(a) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 46-47.
53. **Vibhishan's anointment :—**
(a) Lanka Kand, C 3, v 42-45.
54. **Viraat Purush :—**
(a) Aranya Kand, C 9, v 36-45.
(b) Uttar Kand, C 2, v 63-69.
55. **Vedas/Mahavakyas :—**
(a) Baal Kand, C 1, v 50-52; C 7, v 40-41.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 8, v 40-43.
(c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 17, 21, 24-27, 34.
56. **Vital Airs :—**
(a) Ayodhya Kand, C 1, v 20-21.
(b) Lanka Kand, C 4, v 43-44.
(c) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 29.
57. **Vidya (knowledge)—impediments to :—**
(a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 57.
58. **Varans and Ashrams of the society :—**
(a) Uttar Kand, C 5, v 7.
59. **Worship & path to salvation— different forms of :—**
(a) Aranya Kand, C 2, v 37-38; C 4, v 36-37, 48-49; C 10, v 44.
(b) Kishkindha Kand, C 4, v 16-17, 32-33, 36-37.
(c) Uttar Kand, C 3, v 52-53; C 5, v 46; C 7, v 53-66, 75-76.

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Note

(i) Diagrams and charts are appended either at the end of the relevant Cantos or the verses to which they refer, depending upon technical aspects of composing the book.
(ii) Detailed explanatory and elaborate footnotes, cross references etc. are appended at the end of relevant verses themselves.
(iii) The above list is only indicative and selective and in no way exhaustive or exclusive because it will erroneous to say that the ocean can be studied by sampling a few hundred square kilometers of water and its ecosystem reduced to words in a book, no matter how detailed and erudite the volume might be.

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स एव काले भुवनस्य गोप्ता विश्वाधिपः सर्वभूतेषु गूढः।
यस्मिन् युक्ता ब्रह्मर्षयो देवताश्च तमेवं ज्ञात्वा मृत्युपाशांश्छिनत्ति।।

(श्वेताश्वतर उपनिषद् 4/15)

He is the one who is the protector and sustainer of this existence, and is its Lord. He is concealed (remains imperceptibly but inherently present) in all the creatures. He is the one who is the subject matter of meditation by the exalted sages, seers and Gods. When a man realises his true form, he is able to break free from the great shackle (fear) of death.

(Shwetashawtar Upanishad 4/15)

* * *

ध्यायेत् कल्पतरोर्मूले सुवर्णमयमण्डपे। पुष्पकारव्यविमानान्तः सिंहासनपरिच्छदे ।।
पद्मे वसुदले देवमिन्द्रनीलसमप्रभम्। वीरासनसमासीनं ज्ञानमुद्रोपशोभितम्।।
वामोरुन्यस्ततद्धस्तं सीतालक्ष्मणसेवितम्। रत्नाकल्पं विभुं ध्यात्वा वर्णलक्षं जपेन्मनुम्।।
यद्वा स्मरादिमन्त्राणां जयाभं च हरिं स्मरेत्। (ना० पु० तृ० 73/59-62)

Prayer

There is a large pavilion (or dais) under the Kalpa tree [the Nyctanthes arvor tristis tree]. Inside it (or on the dais), is the celestial Pushpak plane (of Kuber). There is a divine and glorious throne in the plane. The throne has a seating mat made of 8-petalled lotus flower on which is seated Sri Ram in a 'Virasan' posture (i.e. cross-legged and straight spined). His complexion is dark like a 'Indra Neel Mani' (the blue gem worn by Indra). His right hand is held in a 'Gyan Mudra' (with palms open, facing outwards, in a blessing posture held near the shoulder, with the fore and hind arms held closely against the chest) and his left hand rests on his left thigh. He is being served by Sita and Laxman. The 'Vibhu' (omnipresent, all-pervading, omniscient) is adorned by gem and jewel studded ornaments. One should remember and concentrate (focus) his attention on this magnificent view of Sri Ram and do Japa (repetition) of his holy Mantra, and persistently and constantly remember Hari (Vishnu) (Narad Puran, Purvardh, 73/59-62).

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Appendix 5

Brief introduction to various important characters appearing in Adhyatma Ramayan

A. **Prologue**

1. **Sage Sut (verse no. 2)**—He was the son of sage Ugrasriwa Roma Harshan. He was requested by Brahma, the creator, to narrate all the scriptures (Vedas, Purans, Upanishads, Sanhitas etc.) to 88,000 Rishis at Naimi-sharanya pilgrim site. This was a 'Gyan Yagya' ordained as the best form of Yagya by Brahma.
2. **Sage Narad (verse no. 2)**—The celestial saint, son of creator Brahma. He had the capacity to roam in the 3 worlds at will and generally served as a messenger of Gods, and worked for the welfare of creation. He was a great devotee of Lord Vishnu.

B. **Baal Kand—Canto 1**

3. **Shiva (verse no. 6)**—One of the 3 trinity Gods; Lord of annihilation of the world; a great renunciate, most enlightened and erudite amongst the Gods. He was an ascetic who lived in Kailash in the Himalayas. He was the one who first pronounced the divine story of Sri Ram which came to be known as Ramayan.
4. **Parvati (verse no. 6)**—Also called Giriraj Kumari because she was born in the household of Giriraj i.e. the king of mountains. She was the divine consort of Shiva. In her various other manifestations she is also known as Durga, Uma, etc.
5. **Hanuman (verse no. 29)**—Also called Maruti, Pawan-Sut etc. because he is regarded as the son of the Wind-God. His mother was Anjana (Kishkindha Kand, Canto 1, verse 23-24). A great and ardent eternal devotee of Sri Ram, he was instrumental for Sri Ram's successes in his epic war with Ravana. His teacher was the Sun-God. He always remained celibate and is considered one of the most erudite, sagacious and wise amongst Sri Ram's devotees.

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Baal Kand—Canto 2

6. **Sage Kashyap (verse no. 25)**—He did severe penances and Lord Vishnu promised him that the Lord would become his son as Sri Ram in his next life as Dashrath, the king of Ayodhya.

Baal Kand—Canto 3

7. **King Dashrath (verse no. 1)**—Ruler of Ayodhya; father of Sri Ram and his three brothers.

8. **Sage Vashistha (verse no. 2)**—The son of Brahma and the royal priest and moral preceptor (Guru) of the Ikshwaku dynasty which ruled the kingdom of Ayodhya. The word Guru has two syllables—'Gu' and 'ru', the former means darkness while the latter means to dispel. Hence, Guru means an erudite and wise person who is capable of dispelling the darkness of ignorance, lack of wisdom and knowledge of his disciples. Nowhere else is this fact more evident than in the case of Vashitha who taught Sri Ram the essentials of metaphysics and spirituality in his voluminous treatise called 'Yog Vashitha'. Simple English rendering of this tome is proposed to be written by this author.

   It is believed that when Brahma had asked him to accept the post of priesthood, he had refused saying that this was most contemptible and degrading livelihood. But when Brahma had told him that he will have a golden opportunity to serve Lord Vishnu in his incarnation as Sri Ram, he had accepted it (verse nos. 28-30).

   He is one of the seven celestial sages and is also called 'Mantra Drasta' (one who has deep understanding of the Vedic Mantras). He was the one who conceived and enunciated the 7th chapter of Rig Veda, hence it is named after him as 'Vashistha Mandal'.

   Amongst his writings, the chief ones are Vashistha Darma Sutra and Vashistha Smriti.

9. **Sage Rishyasring (verse no. 5)**—He was invited to perform a son-begetting fire sacrifice by king Dashrath. He was the son of sage Vibandh. The legend is that once the sage was meditating in water in a pond when he sighted the celestial beauty (Apsara) named Urvashi and he ejaculated. The sperms together with the water were imbibed by a deer from whom sage Rishyasring was born. Since he had horns like his mother, he was named 'a Rishi with

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horns, or Rishyasring'. Later, when he visited the kingdom of Ang which was suffering from severe drought at the invitation of its king Rompad, the drought abetted. It so pleased the king that he married his daughter Shanta to him.

10. **Kaushalya (verse no. 10)**—The eldest queen of Dashrath; the mother of Sri Ram.

11. **Kaikeyi (verse no. 10)**—The most favoured of the queens; the mother of Bharat.

12. **Sumitra (verse no. 11)**—The junior queen; the mother of Laxman and Shatrughan.

13. **Sri Ram (verse no. 37)**—He was an incarnation of Lord Vishnu, the supreme Lord of Creation. He was the eldest of the 4 brothers and the son of Kaushalya.

14. **Bharat (verse no. 38)**—Son of Kaikeyi. He was similar in physical appearance to Sri Ram. He had refused to accept the crown of Ayodhya which his mother had tried, by intrigue and coercion, to bestow upon him at the cost of Sri Ram. His immaculate and upright reputation has made him a legend in the annals of brotherly love and righteousness. His devotion for Sri Ram is legendary.

15. **Laxman (verse no. 41)**—The twin brother of Shatrughan but the elder amongst the two. He was the son of Sumitra. He was headstrong and could stake his life for Sri Ram, and had accompanied him to the forest during the latter's exile. He was made the crown prince of Ayodhya by Sri Ram at the time of his coronation (Uttar Kand, Canto 16, verse 26). He was the first amongst the four brothers to depart from this mortal world at the time of Sri Ram's final exit from it. (Uttar Kand, Canto 8, verse 67-72.)

16. **Shatrughan (verse no. 41)**—He was the younger brother of Laxman; he looked after day-to-day affairs of the kingdom during the 14 years of Sri Ram's exile.

Baal Kand—Canto 4

17. **Sage Vishwamitra (verse no. 1)**—He was the son of Kaushik. He was a great Sage who had taken Sri Ram and Laxman with him for the protection of his fire sacrifice against the demons; later he got Sri Ram and Sita married.

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Baal Kand—Canto 5

18. **Demons Marich and Subahu (verse no. 5)**—They were the sons of demons Sund and Upsund (Yogvashitha, vairagya prakarn, Canto 8, verse 36). Out of these two, Marich was hit by Sri Ram and thrown 100 yojans (800 miles) away while Subahu was slayed by Laxman (verse no. 7-8). It was Marich who disguised himself as a golden deer/stag to enable Ravana to abduct Sita (Aranya Kand, Canto 7).

19. **Ahilya (verse no. 15)**—She was the wife of celestial sage Gautam. She was cheated by Indra, the king of Gods, and thus earned the curse of her husband and was turned into a rock. She was liberated by the touch of Sri Ram's holy feet (verse no. 19-36).

Baal Kand—Canto 6

20. **The Boatman (verse no. 2)**—He helped Sri Ram cross the river Ganges and was spiritually rewarded by him. His good fortunes by drinking the washed water of Sri Ram's holy feet are a legend.

21. **King Janak or Videha (verse no. 6)**—The ruler of Janakpur or Videhnagar. He was the father of Sita and was considered a great renunciate and wise king.

22. **Sita (verse no. 20)**—Also known as Vaidehi by virtue of her being the daughter of Videha (Janak). She was found by him while ploughing a field (verse no. 58-60). She was married to Sri Ram.

23. **Urmila (verse no. 55)**—She was the younger sister of Sita and was married to Laxman.

24. **Mandavi and Sruti Kirti (verse no. 56)**—Daughters of Janak's brother. They were married to Bharat and Shatrughan respectively.

Baal Kand—Canto 7

25. **Parashurma (verse no. 7)**—The sage was a Brahmin and son of Bhrighu (verse no. 19). He had slayed Kartavirya who had killed his own father. Thereafter, he had killed the Kshatriaya clans 21 times and handed the rule of the earth over to sage Kashyap (verse no. 25-26). He had handed over Lord Vishnu's bow to Sri Ram while he was on his way to Ayodhya from Janakpur (verse no. 16).

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C. **Ayodhya Kand—Canto 2**

26. **Sumantra (verse no. 6)**—He was the chief amongst the ministers of Dashrath and his chief advisor.

27. **Saraswati (verse no. 44)**—The Goddess of speech, knowledge and wisdom. She was sent by the Gods to corrupt the wisdom and intellect Manthara so that Sri Ram could go to the forest the purpose of slaying the evil demons (verse no. 44-46).

28. **Manthara (verse no. 45, 47)**—She was the favoured haunch-back maid of Kaikeyi and the instigator of her to force Sri Ram to exile to install Bharath on the throne of Ayodhya.

Ayodhya Kand—Canto 4

29. **Arundhati (verse no. 80)**—She was the wife of sage Vashistha, the Guru of Raghu's clan (i.e. Sri Ram and his brothers).

Ayodhya Kand—Canto 5

30. **Nishad Guha (verse no. 61)**—He was the chief of the tribal community called Nishad. He was the chieftain of Sringverpur and one of the great friends of Sri Ram (verse no. 62). He had attended the coronation of Sri Ram after his return from exile.

Ayodhya Kand—Canto 6

31. **Sage Bharadwaj (verse no. 29)**—The great sage lived on the banks of river Ganges at Triveni (present day Allahabad). He was the 1st sage visited by Sri Ram on his way to the forest.

32. **Sage Valmiki (verse no. 43)**—The great sage was the 10th son of Prajapati Pracheta (Uttar Kand, Canto 7, verse no. 31). He resided near Chitrakoot. He played host to Sita during her exile and Lav-Kush, the sons of Sita, were born at his hermitage. He wrote the epic Ramayan as well the voluminous treatise on metaphysics and spiritualism called Yog Vashistha. In his earlier times, he was a savage hunter and was converted into a great sage at the intervention of the legendary 'Sapt Rishis' (verse no. 65-86).

Ayodhya Kand—Canto 7

33. **The old and blind Vaishya Couple (verse no. 42)**—Their son was called Shrawan kumar who was inadvertently killed by Dashrath when he was hunting during the night. Their curse resulted in the death of Dashrath lamenting for Sri Ram (verse no. 41-45).

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34. Yudhajit (verse no. 53)—He was the maternal uncle of Bharat.

Ayodhya Kand—Canto 9

35. Sage Atri (verse no. 79)—He resided near the Dandkarnya forest.

36. Anusuiya (verse no. 86-87)—She was the wife of sage Atri. She blessed Sita and gave her divine clothes, body ointment to tide over the difficulties of 14 year exile period.

D. Aranya Kand—Canto 1

37. Demon Viradh (verse no. 17-22, 28)—The first fierce demon that Sri Ram met in the formidable, fearful and dense forest called Dandakarayana (verse no. 10-16). He was slayed by Sri Ram (verse no. 33-34).

38. Vidyadhar (verse no. 38)—The original form of demon Viradh. He was cursed by the ever-wrathful sage Durbasa to become a demon (verse no. 38).

Aranya Kand—Canto 2

39. Sage Sharbhang (verse no. 1)—He was a resident of 'Tapovan' (i.e. forest inhabited by sages, seers, monks, hermits, ascetics who were engrossed in doing Tapa). He died by burning himself on a funeral pile after having Darshan (divine, august viewing) of Sri Ram.

40. Sage Sutikshan (verse no. 25)—He was a disciple of says Agastya and worshipped the holy name of Sri Ram (verse no. 26).

Aranya Kand—Canto 3

41. Sage Agni Jiva (verse no. 1)—He was the younger brother of sage Agastya.

42. Sage Agastya (verse no. 5-8)—The Guru of sage Sutikshan; he expounded the vedantic concept of creation of the world (verse no. 18-29), the important of devotion, acquisition of truthful knowledge (verse no. 32-33, 40-42), the chief method of emancipation and salvation (verse no. 36) etc. He gave Sri Ram Indra's bow, two divine quivers and a gem-studded sword (verse nos. 45-46).

Aranya Kand—Canto 4

43. Jatau (verse no. 1)—The old vulture, he was the younger brother of the vulture king Sampati. He was a friend of king Dashrath (verse no. 3-4) and stayed near the Panchvati hermitage to protect

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Sri Ram, Laxman and Sita. Later on, he was mortally wounded by Ravana while adopting Sita (Canto 7, verse nos. 51-58).

Aranya Kand—Canto 5

44. **Demoness Supernakha (verse nos. 1, 6)**—She was the sister of Ravana. She tried to lure Sri Ram to have conjugal relationship with her (verse no. 11), but her ears and nose were chopped-off by Laxman at the instance of Sri Ram as a punishment (verse no. 20).

45. **Demon Khar (verse nos. 21, 26)**—Supernakha's brother and cousin of Ravana (v 58); he was the local commander of the demons. She went to him first after being deformed by Laxman. He attacked in retaliation and was killed (verse no. 34-35).

46. **Demons Dushan and Trishira (verse no. 27)**—They were companions of Khar and joined the battle with him against Sri Ram.

47. **Ravana (verse nos. 38-39)**—The villain of Ramayan. He was the brother of Supernakha. It was the sight of his deformed sister and her instigation that led him to steal Sita resulting in the epic war and the decimation of the demon clan. The details of his genealogy are appended as a chart to Uttar Kand, Canto 2. His birth, exploits etc. are detailed in Uttar Kand, Cantos 1 and 2.

Aranya Kand—Canto 9

48. **Demon Kabandh (verse no. 1-4)**—He was an octopus-like fierce demon with a headless trunk and long tentacle-like arms. He was jointly slayed by the two brothers Ram and Laxman. His earlier story is narrated in verse no. 21-25.

Aranya Kand—Canto 10

49. **Shabari (verse no. 1)**—The low caste old Bhil woman; a disciple of sage Matang (verse no. 11-12). Sri Ram described to her the 9-fold path of devotion (verse no. 20-31) and she had advised him to go to the Rishyamook mountain and befriend Sugriv (verse no. 36-39) who will help him. She died by burning herself by the fire of Yoga.

E. Kishkindha Kand—Canto 1

50. **Sugriv (verse no. 7)**—He was the younger brother of Vaali and was exiled by the latter due to some misunderstanding (verse no. 22). He lived on the Rishyamook mountain along with Hanuman

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and 3 other ministers (verse no. 21). He was befriended by Sri Ram (verse no. 48-45) and had helped him in finding Sita (verse no. 42-43). He was crowned king of the monkey race at Kishkindha by Sri Ram (Canto 3, verse no 46). Details of his birth etc. are described in Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 13-14.

51. **Vaali (verse no. 46)**—The elder brother of Sugriv. He had expelled his younger brother on some misunderstanding and had usurped the kingdom. He was later on killed by Sri Ram (Canto 2, verse nos. 46-51). Details of his birth etc. are described in Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 1-12.

52. **Demon Mayavi (verse no. 47)**—He was the son of demon Maye. He came to challenge Vaali and was killed by the latter (verse nos. 48-50, 54).

53. **Demon Dundhuvi (verse no. 61-62)**—He attacked Kishkindha disguised as a wild buffalo. He was killed by Vaali (verse nos. 63-67).

Kishkindha Kand—Canto 2

54. **Tara (verse no. 20)**—The wife of Vaali, she had tried her best to dissuade him from going to fight with Sugriv (verse nos. 20-21, 25-33). She is considered one of the five most chaste women in Hindu mythology.

Kishkindha Kand—Canto 3

55. **Angad (verse no. 2)**—The son of Vaali; he was the second most loyal soldier of Sri Ram next only to Hanuman. He was later made crown prince of Kishkindha by Sri Ram (verse no. 48).

Kishkindha Kand—Canto 6

56. **The monkey and bear commanders (verse no. 11-15, 23-24)**—Jamvant (king of bears), Hanuman, Nal, Neel, Gawai, Gawaksha, Gandhmadan, Sharavh, Maindav, Gaj, Panas, Balimukh, Dadhimukh, Sushen, Tar, Kesari, Diwid etc.

57. **Yogini Swayamprabha (verse nos. 40, 53)**—She was the daughter of a Gandharva (celestial musician) named Dibya and a friend of Hema, the daughter of Vishwakarma (the architect of the Gods). She was found in a deep cave by the search party of monkeys led by Angad and Hanuman which was sent by Sri Ram to search for Sita. She subsequently worshipped Sri Ram (verse no. 59-78) and

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went to Badrinath (in the Himalayas) on his instructions (verse no. 83).

Kishkindha Kand—Canto 7

58. **Sampati (verse no. 29, 35)**—He was the elder brother of Jatau (verse no. 47) and lived in a cave of Mt. Mahendra (verse no. 29). He told the monkeys the location of Sita in Lanka (verse nos. 51-54) and advised them to cross the ocean (verse nos. 55-56) to meet her.

Kishkindha Kand—Canto 8

59. **Sage Chandrama (verse no. 8)**—He lived on the summit of Mt. Vindhyachal. It was at his hermitage where Sampati fell when his wings were burnt by the scorching sun. He had blessed Sampati that he would help in Sri Ram's works by telling the location of Sita to the search party (verse nos. 45-52), and as a reward, he will get back his wings.

F. Sundar Kand—Canto 1

60. **Sursa (verse no. 10)**—She was the mother of legendary serpents/dragons and was sent by the Gods to test Hanuman's strength and intelligence (verse nos. 11-12). Hanuman had entered and come out of her mouth which she had stretched up to 50 yojans (400 miles) wide.

61. **Mainak (verse no. 26)**—The ocean had asked this mountain to rise up and give Hanuman a little rest while he was crossing the ocean.

62. **Demoness Singhika (verse no. 35)**—She lived in the ocean and used to catch over-flying creatures (e.g. birds) by catching hold of their shadow in water (verse nos. 34-35). She was kicked and killed by Hanuman when she tried the trick on him (verse no. 38).

63. **Lankini (verse no. 43)**—The patron goddess of Lanka. She was assigned the task of protecting Lanka from intruders. She was the first hurdle Hanuman faced when he landed on the soil of Lanka, but he subdued her by punching her with his closed fists (verse nos. 44-47).

Sundar Kand—Canto 2

64. **Trijata (verse no. 47)**—An old demoness assigned by Ravana to

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guard Sita in Ashok Van (the place where Sita was confined by him). She was her best friend there and she confided her emotions and frustrations to her (verse nos. 48-54).

Sundar Kand—Canto 3

65. **Jayant, son of Indra (verse no. 54)**—He assumed the form of a crow and in order to tease Janki (Sita) and test Sri Ram's strength, he had nibbled at Sita's toe at Chitrakoot, whereupon Sri Ram had made him blind in one eye (verse nos. 54-60).

66. **Prince Akshay Kumar (verse no. 86)**—He was the younger brother of Meghanad, the son of Ravana. He was sent by the latter to capture Hanuman while he was destroying the Ashok garden, but was instead killed by the latter (verse nos. 87-88).

67. **Indrajit (Meghanad) (verse no. 89)**—He was the elder son of Ravana and had helped his father in his reckless and relentless conquest of the whole world. His birth, exploits and fame are detailed in Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse nos. 43-62. He was later killed in battle with Laxman (Lanka Kand, Canto 9).

G. Lanka Kand—Canto 1

68. **Kumbhakarn (verse no. 13)**—He was the brother of Ravana and slept for six months at a stretch, and ate his heart full for 1 day. His birth etc. are detailed in Uttar Kand, Canto 1, verse nos. 58-61 and Canto 2, verse nos. 20-23, 45-46. He was slayed by Sri Ram in the epic war (Lanka Kand, Canto 8).

69. **Vibhishan (verse no. 20)**—Brother of Ravana and an ardent devotee of Sri Ram. He and Kumbhakarn had tried their best to dissuade Ravana from being inimical to Sri Ram and avoid rout of the demon clan. Vibhishan's birth, Tapa etc. are detailed in Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 16-19. He was severely rebuked and kicked out by Ravana when he advised him against fighting Sri Ram. As a result, he joined Sri Ram's camp in disgust. He was instrumental in the death of his two brothers, his nephew (Meghanad) and all others. He was crowned king of Lanka by Sri Ram at the end of the war (Lanka Kand, Canto 12, verse nos. 44-46).

Lanka Kand—Canto 3

70. **Nal (verse no. 84)**—The son of Vishwarkarma, the architect of Gods. He built the bridge across the ocean.

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Lanka Kand—Canto 4

71. **Demon Shuk (verse no. 14-15)**—A spy sent by Ravana after Vibhishan. He was captured, punished and released by the monkeys (verse nos. 15-17). He tried his best to advise Ravana to abandon his bellicose mood and opt for reconciliation with Sri Ram (verse nos. 18-56), but he wouldn't listen. He was insulted by Ravana (Canto 5, verse nos. 1-4) and so he withdrew. His previous life story is described in Canto 5, verse nos. 5-24.

Lanka Kand—Canto 5

72. **Malyawan (verse no. 25)**—He was the maternal grandfather of Ravana. He was very wise, righteous, well versed in laws of morality and ethics, and old. He also tried to rationalise with Ravana (verse nos. 26-36) but was rebuffed by the latter (verse nos. 37-40).

73. **The chief monkey commanders who led the 1st assault on Lanka (verse nos. 54-55)**—Hanuman, Angad, Kumud, Neel, Nal, Sharabh, Maind, Diwid, Jamvant, Dadhimukh, Kesari, Tar etc.

Lanka Kand—Canto 8

74. **Demon Kalnemi (verse no. 36-37)**—He was forced by Ravana to try to trap and kill Hanuman while he was going to bring the Sanjivani herb to revive the wounded Laxman in the battle field (Canto 8, verse no. 38—Canto 9, verse no. 4). Kalnemi was killed by kicks and blows of Hanuman (Canto 9, verse nos. 30-33).

75. **Nikumbhila (verse no. 57)**—The patron goddess of the demons who was worshipped by them at the start of war and also during decisive battles. She was worshipped by both Meghanad and Ravana by offering fire sacrifices, but unfortunately for them, in both the cases, their sacrifices were disrupted by the monkey army at the behest of Vibhishan, resulting in their death.

Lanka Kand—Canto 10

75. **Shukracharya (verse no. 4)**—The Guru of the demon race. He was approached by Ravana to intercede on his behalf against Sri Ram. But Shukracharya's prescription of doing the fire sacrifice to make Ravana invincible (verse nos. 7-10) went haywire when the monkeys defiled it (verse nos. 13-35).

76. **Sarma (verse no. 18)**—She was the wife of Vibhishan. She showed

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the invading army the secret cave where Ravana was doing his sacrifice to become invincible (verse nos. 18-19) leading to its defilement. She had thereby squared up with Ravana the humiliation which her husband had suffered at his hands.

77. **Mandodari (verse no. 24)**—She was the wife of Ravana and mother of Meghanad and Akshay Kumar. She was the daughter of demon Maye who was the architect of the demons (Uttar Kand, Canto 2, verse no. 40). She also tried to persuade Ravana to drop his rashness and end the war. (Verse nos. 44-54)

Lanka Kand—Canto 11

78. **Matali (verse no. 19)**—He was the charioteer of Indra, the King of Gods. He was sent by Indra with the divine chariot to help Sri Ram in the final day's duel with Ravana (verse nos. 20-25). He was latter sent back to Indra by Sri Ram (Canto 12, verse no. 42-43).

Lanka Kand—Canto 13

79. **Brahma (verse no. 9)**—The patriarch of the Gods; grandfather of creation. He is said to have emerged from the navel of Lord Vishnu (Uttar Kand, Canto 8, verse nos. 27-28). It was on his prayers that Vishnu manifested himself as Sri Ram.

80. **Indra (verse no. 23)**—The king of Gods. He was the father of Vaali, the elder brother of Sugriv (Uttar Kand, Canto 3, verse nos. 10-12).

Lanka Kand—Canto 15

81. **Sages Vashistha, Vamdeo, Jabali, Gautam and Valmiki (verse no. 37-39)**—These sages witnessed the coronation of Sri Ram on the throne of Ayodhya.

82. **Yaksha (verse no. 67)**—These are a type of demi-Gods. They protect the treasury of Gods and tend the garden of Kuber who is the treasurer of Gods.

83. **Gandharvas (verse no. 68)**—These are celestial musicians.

84. **Those who attended Sri Ram's coronation (verse no. 70-72)**—The great dragon or legendary serpents, Siddhas (mystics; the attained ones), Kinnars (celestial singers and dancers; semi-Gods with the head of horse), Marut (the wind-God), Vasu (semi-God), sages/hermits/seers/monks, holy cow (symbolising docile, pet

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animals) cave dwellers, birds, Prajapati (the guardians of the world), Apsaras (celestial courtesans; beautiful damsels of Indra's court) etc.

H. **Uttar Kand—Canto 1**

85. **Vishwamitra, Asit, Kanwa, Durbasa, Brighu, Angira, Kashyap, Vamdeo, Atri, Seven celestial sages, Agastya (verse no. 7-8)**—All of them visited Sri Ram sometimes after his coronation. They described the previous life stories of the demons (Canto 1, verse no. 24—Canto 2 full, and Canto 3, verse nos. 29-60) as well as of Sugriv and Vaali (Canto 3, verse nos. 1-24).

86. **Sage Pulastya (verse no. 25)**—The son of Lord Brahma, the creator. He was the grandfather of Ravana.

87. **Sage Trinbindu (verse no. 26)**—He played host to sage Pulastya when he came to do penances (Tapa) and subsequently married his daughter to him (verse nos. 31-33).

88. **Visrawa (verse no. 35)**—He was the son of sage Pulastya through his first wife who was the daughter of sage Trinbindu (verse nos. 34-35).

89. **Kuber (verse no. 37-38)**—The son of Pulastya with his second wife who was the daughter of sage Bharadwaj (verse no. 36). He was made the treasurer of Gods by Lord Brahma, the creator.

90. **Deomon Sumali (verse no. 45-46)**—The Lord of subterranean demons. They had fled from Lanka earlier fearing the wrath of Vishnu (verse no. 43). He was an ogre (flesh eating demon).

91. **Kaikasi (verse no. 48)**—The daughter of Sumali who married sage Visrawa (verse nos. 50-57) and was the mother of Ravanan and his brothers and sisters (verse nos. 55-59).

Uttar Kand—Canto 2

92. **Vritajwala (verse no. 41)**—The daughter of Virochan. She was married to Kumbhakarn.

93. **Sailush (verse no. 42)**—He was a Gandharva and father of Sarma who was married to Vibhishan.

Uttar Kand—Canto 3

94. **Sanat Kumar (verse no. 30)**—The son of Brahma, he was approached by Ravana asking him about the one who was the most

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superior amongst the Gods (verse nos. 31-32). On learning that Vishnu was the supreme Lord (verse nos. 33-36), he decided to get himself killed by him to achieve salvation (verse nos. 37-43, 58-59).

Uttar Kand—Canto 4

95. **Vijai (verse no. 47)**—He was the royal spy who first told Sri Ram that people of Ayodhya are casting aspersions on the integrity of Sita and are questioning the probity and propriety of Sri Ram accepting her (verse nos. 49-52).

Uttar Kand—Canto 6

96. **Demon Lavan (verse no. 1)**—He was the ruler of Mathura and the son of Madhu (verse nos. 6-7). He was killed by Shatrughan (verse nos. 15, 25).

97. **Kush and Lav (verse no. 26-27)**—The two sons of Sita born in the hermitage of sage Valmiki after she was sent to her second exile by Sri Ram. The elder was Kush. Later, at the time of Sri Ram's final departure from this world, Kush was made the king of Avadh and Lav of the territories north of it (Uttar Kand, Canto 9, verse nos. 6, 16-18).

Uttar Kand—Canto 8

98. **Pushkar and Taksha (verse no. 3)**—These were the two sons of Bharat. After slaying the Gandharvas, Bharat had made his elder son Pushkar the king of Pushkarawati and Taksha the king of Takshila (verse nos. 1-3).

99. **Angad and Chitraketu (verse no. 6)**—The two sons of Laxman. Laxman was sent by Sri Ram to vanquish the savage Bhils in the western territories (verse nos. 4-5), and after the conquest, he installed his two sons there.

100. **Kaal (verse no. 9)**—The God of death. He was sent by Brahma with the message for Sri Ram that it was time for him to wind up his worldly activities (verse nos. 33-39). According to Kaal's own version, he was the eldest son, or the first born, of Sri Ram (verse nos. 22-23).

101. **Durbasa (verse no. 40)**—The most wrathful and short tempered amongst the sages. At the behest of destiny, he literally gate-

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crashed on Sri Ram's meeting with Kaal leading to Sri Ram abandoning Laxman (verse nos. 41-72).

102. **Demons Madhu Kaitav (verse no. 26)**—The two demons were slayed by Vishnu and from their flesh and bones he created the earth prior to its being populated by Brahma (verse nos. 26-28).

Uttar Kand—Canto 9

103. **Subahu and Yupketu (verse no. 21-22)**—The two sons of Shatrughan. The former was made king of Mathura and the latter of Vidisha.

* * *

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Appendix 6

A child's emotional prittle-prattle of Dedication

My dearest and most beloved Ram!

The last time we met, I had taken as a gift for you the books that I say 'I wrote' for you in your honour. That meeting has cast an indelible spell on my mind and is firmly engraved in my memory. Remember?

For an eternal moment, we stood; you holding me by my hands while we peered deep into each other's eyes till the time welling-up tears had blurred my vision, and I had to lower my eyelids to wipe the cloud clean, and when I raised it again, it was your turn to lower them. No words spoken, no greetings exchanged, no formalities shown—just profound silence. But before those books could fall-off my shaky hands, you had caught .....! How ecstatic and exhilarated you had been, and how overwhelmed and unbound I had been.

Earlier on, when you had ordained me to spread your gospel by the medium of translation into the English language the various works of Goswami Tulsidas, Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan, Valmiki's Yog Vashistha amongst others—I was in a quandary and scared stiff for I wasn't competent, I knew my limitations. I couldn't say no, and I couldn't say yes. There was silence, and you had smiled at me with one of those strange but enchanting smile of yours which have made even the most wise and exalted of sages, seers and saints speechless.

My reluctance was dispelled when I garnered courage by remembering the words of Paul to Timothy and Hebrews in the holy Bible—'..... wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God which is in thee. For God has not given us the spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind.....but be thou partaker of the affliction of the gospel according to the power of god....who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, before the world began.....and hath brought life and immortality to light through the gospel

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(Bible, epistle of Paul to Timothy, II/1/6-10)....and the things that thou hast heard of me, the same commit thou to faithful men....study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth....and the Lord shall deliver me from every evil work, and will preserve me unto his heavenly kingdom, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen (Bible, epistle of Paul to Timothy, II/2/2,15,18). Make me perfect in every good work to do his will working in you that which is well pleasing in his sight (Bible, the Hebrews, 13/21)'.

There was a deep silence. The decision was made. I shall not flounder and procrastinate, but plunge head-on. This infant joker who had emerged in this strange and funny world, yelping, panting and bawling, had not the slightest idea that a day will dawn when it would stand before its Father with Veda Vyas' Adhyatma Ramayan English version in hand, in utter silence and a blanked-out head, to present Him the result of the hard toil ordained by Him, not knowing what it is all about. And how miraculously this has come about. How incredible it is that the pen formed various shapes on the paper which transformed themselves into words, sentences, paragraphs, chapters and finally a book! Miracles might happen but this—at least to me—is incredulous!

I do not know the technicalities of how a flower blooms or a tree blossoms. The beauty of the rainbow cannot be described in a science text book; the poet's heart more than his words and the painter's eyes rather than the canvass perhaps catches it far better.

People ask the gawky question—whether you worship the Lord as a Bhakta (devotee) or a Gyani (a scholar, one who sees the Lord everywhere including his heart and is well read) and, secondly, what is the nature of relationship that you have with your Ram. What a stupid question reflecting ignorance. An honest Bhakta possesses all the qualities of a true Scholar for he has to be focused on his Lord, blind to all distractions, has the ability to speedily understand, grasp and arrive at the conclusion about the truth faster than anyone else who are still groping in the dark, doubting and debating, while a Scholar must have singularity of purpose, sincerity, dedication and devotion as does a Bhakta have towards his Lord. It is only when the distinction between the two is effaced does one realise the Lord.

As to other question of relationship, well, this exists between two entities A and B; that is, when there is duality. When there is none, the

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question does not arise. Even after reading and studying Adhyatma Ramayan one does not understand these two basic concepts, then he should read it again!

But I write this to you because I wished to express my wonder, my marvel, my astonishment with a wide gaping mouth, my thanks, my gratitude with a broad smile, for when I stand before you, I am so dumbfounded and lost for words that I can't speak. So I scribbled this little prittle-prattle bubbling over from my heart like a spewing volcano. A child is prone to mischief, incessant banter and chatter, so I hope and am sure that you will forgive me. It is not that I do not know that profound silence are the best words spoken for from silence has emerged this cosmos and thence shall it coalesce.

But before the oil in my earthen lamp exhausts and my flickering flame merges with the eternal flame, let me complete—as best as you wish me to—your unfinished task, and that is Valmiki's Yog Vashitstha in its English rendering and other books such as Veda Vyas' Devi Puran Mahabhagvat Ramayan, Tulsidas' Janki and Parvati Mangal as well as Ram Taponishad thrown in for good measure. And one day I shall again stand before you with it in my hand—silent as always, wordless as usual, with a final quiver in my lips as the last drop of oil dries up in my lamp, and the flame vanishes in such a way that no one can distinguish which of the two flames has vanished and which remained! Then I'll let the earthen pot drop and shatter into pieces and scattered around your holy feet, giving you no chance to refill it and relight it to spend another tormenting round in this world. Have you got my point?

Oh the most beloved Ram! The mischievous but beatific and enchanting smile on your face when the meaning of what I have just said sinks in you, let it be eternal as much as the pensiveness of your countenance when you worry about me and my welfare. With you with me, what have I got to worry about, for haven't you said, '...and, lo, I am with you alway, even up to the end of the world (Bible, gospel of St. Matthew, 28/20)', and 'I trust I shall shortly see thee, and we shall speak face to face (Bible, 3rd epistle of John, 14)'.

Well, I don't know what you'll speak to me, but I know for certain that when you do come face to face with me, you'll be able to speak nothing even as I am able to speak nothing in front of you, for, remember 'silence speaks volumes and a wet, tearful eye is the best dictionary'.

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The books that you've got written through me are honestly all yours; this is my faithful disclaimer. Nevertheless, the fact that you affixed my name to them as their author is a measure of your limitless benevolence, munificence, magnanimity, grace, kindness and love for me and not any credit or expertise on my part.

And though I'd like to thank you, I won't because thanking process creates a formal occasion, a distance, a duality of a giver and a taker—and I don't want any of them between you and me. But nevertheless, your beloved child will leave behind a legacy that will make him immortal in your heart and memory for as long as time exists.

Finally, do convey my greatest of reverence to Hanuman whom I regard as my Guru, and without him these books wouldn't have come into existence.

So, till the next time.... be of good cheer, be happy, be smiling, have fond memories, forgive me for all my follies, omissions and commissions, and love this prattling little child with all its shortcomings and warts. Therein lies your greatness.

With love, Amen!

Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia

Ram Navami 2009

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Ajai Kumar Chhawchharia born on 8th August, 1955 in Burdwan district of West Bengal, is a humble and unpretentious bachelor, who has dedicated his entire life to the service of Lord Ram. At present he is residing in the holy pilgrim city of Ayodhya (U.P. India) since 1985.

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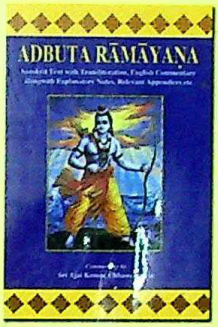

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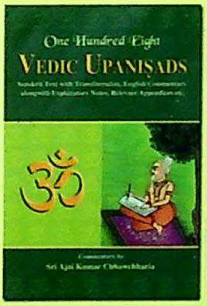

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